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The Editors
URBAN VOLCANOS,
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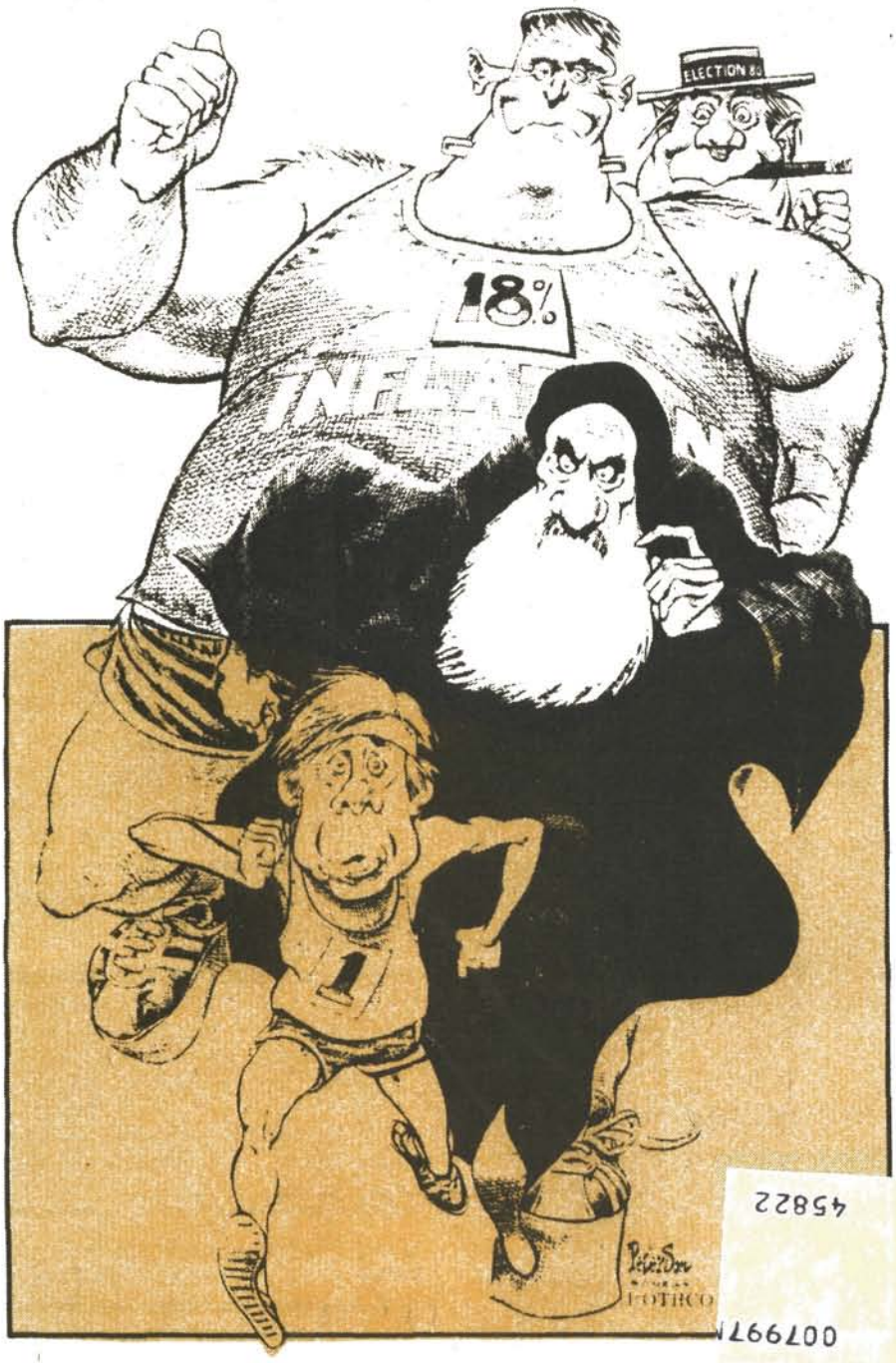
TAX REVOLT II

ONE DOLLAR

JUNE 6, 1980



The chances for Nicaragua

Death comes to the village

The Empire strikes out

UNIVERSITY PRESS ISSUE

THE CHURCH BETWEEN THE WARS

REVOLUTION ETHICS

AL SMITH'S DEFEAT

REVIVALS, REFORMS, & AWAKENINGS

U.S. CATHOLICISM IN POLITICS

BROWNSON-HECKER CORRESPONDENCE

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Correspondence

A war against God

Claremont, Calif.

To the Editor: My heartfelt thanks to *Commonweal* for your lead editorial entitled "'Winning' a Nuclear War?" in your issue of March 28. It is high time that somebody with your courage and vision pointed out the sheer irresponsible demagoguery of anyone who talks about the possibility of winning such a war. This is especially reprehensible when the people who speak of the possibility of any nation surviving such a war are people asking to be elected to high office in our country.

Long ago a commission of the United Nations on which both the United States and the Soviet Union were represented issed a report in which approximately the following language appeared: "If ever a reasonable number of nuclear bombs were exploded in such a war, this would be the end of human civilization as we have known it."

It would be well for those who glibly talk about a nuclear war to remember that aside from the killing of most of the population even in the country that supposedly won the war the survivors would in all likelihood give birth to a race of subhuman creatures. Any so-called modern war would not be so much a war between nations as a war against God Almighty Himself.

JERRY VOORHIS

The Exodus experience

Stevens Point, Wisc.

To the Editors: Your editorial of April 25, "Darkness Visible," does indeed touch "*the* theological point of our time," and you do indeed note it "at the risk of offending all sides in a most sensitive issue." How are we to understand our relating Jesus to the Holocaust? To go on further here we truly "must doff shoes, enter as if walking on soul-ground that will shatter our illusions about who we are."

In entering this soul-ground, however, we must also go back in time to the origins of the Judeo-Christian experience. We readily recall the experience of the Exodus, a people coming out of Egypt, going forth into a promised land, flowing with milk and honey. But we do not readily recall that the land of Canaan in Palestine was already inhabited, that the promised land was taken as well as given.

We need a more complete understanding of the Exodus experience. What does the unending experience of the Middle East, a land flowing with blood and tears, teach us about ourselves? Does the Exodus experience involve three phases or moments, those of liberation, purification and reconciliation?

While Norman Gottwald in *Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel 1250-1050 B.C.* questions whether Israel simply came out of Egypt, instead arguing that the people who became Israel were already in Canaan, it seems that either way the central theological point involves an absence of reconciliation between Israel and other peoples.

The Exodus experience involves the matter of reconciliation more than it does that of liberation—or of purification through two generations in the Sinai Desert. What is the meaning of conquest, exile and return? How does God use nations? How does God speak through prophets?

To pose such questions is to think the unthinkable, to speak the unspeakable. And yet Western culture has reached a dead-end with and in its idolatry of self-realization. Only a theology of reconciliation with others can save us from self-annihilation through a nuclear holocaust.

RAYMOND J. STROIK

Burgess on Mailer

Montagnola, Switzerland

To the Editors: Alas, John Garvey! How the mighty are fallen, from the heights of discernment in "Sick, Sick, Sick—or Evil?" to the fashionable funk of "Mailer's Best in Years" [Mar. 14].

Perhaps *Commonweal* readers might benefit from a dissenting verdict—from the novelist (and Catholic) Anthony Burgess. Writing in the 11 November London Sunday *Observer*, Burgess had this to say about Mailer's *Executioner's Song:*

> The question must finally be asked: why bother? Granted that every human soul may be worthy of 1,056 pages, why should a cold murderer with a certain capacity for love and poetry be deemed worthier of such expensive celebration than the harmless grocer in Gissing's *New Grub Street?* Worthy means newsworthy. Newsworthy means tied up with sex and death. Newsworthiest means committed, like good old Charlie Manson, to gratuitous abominations which give a meaning to terms like theological evil. Mailer may need money to pay his multiple alimony, but he is selling out to something nastier than commerce.

MICHAEL D. AESCHLIMAN

The American School in Switzerland

Down with dialectic

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Gregory Baum misses the point of Berger's thesis about the conservative imprint of sociology [("Peter Berger's Unfinished Symphony," May 9]. That conservatism, in Berger's words, "is not based on the conviction that the institutions of the status quo are sacred, inexorably right, or empirically inevitable . . . Rather it is based on skepticism about the status quo in society *as*

(Continued on page 351)

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OUR URBAN VOLCANOS

ONLY A SPECIAL type of mind could doubt that the stream of refugees from Castro's Cuba constitutes a serious indictment of that entire regime. Who but a dogmatist willfully wearing ideological blinders would argue that all those individuals and families are criminals, slackers, and "no-goods"; or, when such an excuse is proposed, would not ask why the Havana regime, after nearly a quarter century in power, should have produced so many unenthusiastic citizens ready to leave their homeland at the first opportunity?

To look with unblinkered eyes on the Cuban exodus is one thing, of course. Are we equally willing to do so with the Miami riot? What if such an outburst had occurred in Warsaw, Prague, Shanghai, or one of the cities of the U.S.S.R. — with individuals prowling the streets ready to kill, with sixteen people in fact killed, hundreds of others injured, millions of dollars of property up in flames? Would we treat that event as only a terrible but isolated incident, or as only a reflection on those thousands of people actually in the streets? Or would we conclude that it revealed something deeply awry in the government, the economy, and the culture?

Suddenly Miami has shocked us back to that period in the second half of the sixties when late spring was regularly marked by warnings about "long, hot summers." Eventually it was said that such warnings were themselves a sort of threat, and that the editorial post-mortems urging that the nation attend to the basic causes of urban rioting were a sort of incitement, and that government recognition of grievances followed by promises of aid constituted a sort of reward and encouragement. There was no evidence that the urban riots of that time broke out (or for that matter faded away) as a result of the more "understanding climate" supposedly created by liberal media or liberal government. Yet who, in fact, can tell, once society breaks down to the point of fighting in the streets, exactly what degree of unyielding force — armed force, to be precise — and what degree of sympathetic response promises the best results, both in the short and the long runs? The political leaders of the sixties who demanded justice for urban ghetto-dwellers even as they deplored violence and destruction did not, of course, think that our society had really broken down to the point of brute confrontation. Implicitly or explicitly they made their appeals in the context of that decade's momentum toward racial equality and of that decade's belief that American society had the spiritual and material capacities for change and renewal.

It is exactly the absence of such a context today that makes Miami so terrible a portent. The journalistic cliché about volcanos in our cities may take on a new dimension of truth. One suspects that the stance the media and political figures have been taking toward Miami, and will likely take toward any further outbreaks, rather resembles the attitude they are taking toward Mt. St. Helens: here is a tragic event demanding emergency measures for the moment but finally beyond human power to

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prevent or affect. Officials are dispatched, loans are promised for cleaning up and rebuilding; but the underlying reality? That is part of nature.

Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, economist Martin Feldstein recently expressed the conventional wisdom: six to seven percent unemployment is "the natural unemployment rate"; and though Feldstein declared himself a supporter of the fashionable "supply side approach to unemployment and productivity," he argued that it was no substitute for a three-to-four-years dose of eight to nine percent unemployment. What this and like arguments amount to is that America must simply learn to live with a permanent underclass, just as we must live with our volcanos. For a "natural unemployment rate" of that size can be translated into a much higher one among blacks and other minorities. It can be translated into corresponding degrees of demoralization and desperation. It can be translated into family breakdown, a condition which becomes the seedbed for further personal and social disorganization. (Andrew Greeley has recently pointed out that "almost all of the increase in divorce is at the lower end of the economic scale — in families with income under $10,000 a year. . . . It is poverty, not modernization, which leads to collapse of family ties.") And finally it can and will be translated into anger, resentment, and destruction.

Living with our volcanos may take some doing. It may require, for example, that we disguise from ourselves the full extent of the problem. Thus the National Commission on Employment and Unemployment Statistics has recently ruled against recognizing the full number of "discouraged workers" — labor market dropouts — in the unemployment statistics. "Discouragement is a state of mind," the Commissioner of Labor Statistics explained; the concept is "soft" and "squishy." As though states of mind are not vitally important — economists and policy makers feel otherwise when it comes to "business confidence" or "inflation psychology" or "rational expectations." What the argument finally reduces to is the fact that discouraged workers are often marginal in our economy. It is the "prime workers . . . the backbone of the American economy" with "the skill and the incentive to get back into the labor market" that the Commissioner feels should be the object of official unemployment statistics. The reasoning is circular: once a problem gets bad enough it no longer deserves to be emphasized in our measurements. Leaving "discouraged workers" out of the official unemployment rate is another way of adjusting our perceptions to the limits of our economy.

That is but one small example of a larger trend. The warnings against the "redistributist state." The appeals for a tax structure favoring the "productive" rather than the "unproductive" (i.e., those with sufficient wealth to invest rather than those without it). The complacency sounded in the recent comments of one of the more intelligent young neoconservatives: "We are the first generation to come to maturity in an America where black citizens are not subject to institutional public humiliations. . . . At the same time, the liberal agenda of 'unmet needs' is by now virtually exhausted." All this was afoot before Miami, and one would like to think that such views have flourished partly because the last decade's unbroken surface of social peace let them go untested. But now that Miami has signaled the possible tests ahead, can we expect more than this philosophy of resigned neglect? The odds are not good.

THE HAITIAN HOMELESS

The federal government's generous, if erratic, welcome to Cuban refugees is just. Its consistently hostile policy denying Haitian claims to political asylum is not. Some 10,000 black, French-speaking Haitians have sought asylum on our shores since 1971. The influx has never been a flood, not even during the brief period in early 1978 when the Immigration and Naturalization Service relaxed its stance and issued work permits to Haitians. If flood there were to be, one would have expected it then. There was none. On the other hand, the fact that Haitians denied entrance are black has not escaped the attention of American blacks in Miami.

The new Refugee Act of 1980, signed into law by President Carter on March 17th, represents a landmark. Previously, only people from Communist countries or the Middle East qualified as refugees eligible for federal assistance, housing, subsidies for resettlement, and work authorization. The new law extends refugee status to any person outside his or her nation who would face persecution upon return—and thus, for the first time, acknowledges that refugees are also made in rightist regimes with whom the U.S. often has profitable commercial relations.

Since June of 1978, the INS has undertaken a crash program to expel Haitians on the ground that their flight is for better working conditions rather than to escape political persecution. Ten- to fifteeen-minute hearings without counsel focus on the question, "Did you come here to work?" Of course they did. An affirmative answer earns a quick one-way ticket back to Port-au-Prince. The key question is: what do the returnees face on their return?

Current INS policy is based on the conclusion of a State Department Study Team which visited Haiti last May and interviewed eighty-six returnees out of the six hundred repatriated since 1972. Flatly contradicting, among other reports, the more extensive studies of Church World Service, State's study team found no evidence of persecution. Little wonder, say critics of the report. The State Department supplied the Haitian government, well known for intimidation, with the list of six hundred names. Many of the interviews were held in public. The respondents feared informers, and were aware they were being asked to attest to seeking asylum for reasons which are defined in Haitian criminal law as "defamation of the nation." To defame the nation subjects the accuser to the vigilante action of Baby Doc's dreaded secret police, the Tontons Macoutes. In many cases it means "disappearance" into prisons which Amnesty International calls "death traps" and compares to Nazi concentration camps. According to

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journalist Michelle Bogre and other inside informants, many families of returnees believe their missing relatives are still in Miami. "Haiti today remains," said the January report of the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs, "one of the most barbarous states in the Caribbean." As if to confirm the point, the few who did allege human rights violations to State's study team ended up in prison two weeks after the team left the country.

It's as if the State Department and its organ, INS, had bought one of President Duvalier's most effective mystifications, the idyllic country scenes painted in Haitian folk art. We remember, however, having seen a striking exception to the idyll, a painting of a village street. The peasants were zombies, and walked between the corpses of their fellows hung up on crosses like so many telephone poles. In this case, a religious hieroglyphic was the way some canny folk artist got his message by Jean-Claude Duvalier's cyclopean export licensors. The message was clear.

MR. JARVIS AGAIN

Shortly after this editorial appears, voters in California will decide on Proposition 9, a state income tax initiative and son of Howard Jarvis's Proposition 13. Proposition 9 is straightforward; the measure is designed to cut state income taxes in half. It follows Proposition 13 which slashed the very high California property taxes and Proposition 4 which mandated that state government expenditures cannot increase faster than the rate of inflation.

Two years ago Proposition 13 passed on a wave of enthusiasm by a 2-to-1 margin; it is highly unlikely that Proposition 9 will do nearly as well. From all reports, an increasing number of California voters are looking at the hard facts. Before Proposition 13 property taxes in California were unusually high; that measure cut them by 57 percent. In the process it reduced state revenues by an estimated $7 billion a year. California survived because it had a surplus on hand to dip into, but the passage of Proposition 13 resulted in the elimination of over 100,000 local and state public service jobs. In addition, there have been staff cutbacks in half of all school districts in the state, hours have been reduced at many libraries, and highway maintenance has been curtailed.

All this makes people worry about the possible effects of Proposition 9. Making matters worse, opponents of the measure claim, is the fact that the proposal would favor rich taxpayers, with the big dollar savings going to less than 4 percent of the population. One result of Proposition 9, its critics charge, would be the imposition of a $1000 tuition fee at state colleges and universities and the elimination of kindergarten and the senior year of high school in some school districts. How effective such gloomy prognostications will be remains to be seen; exaggerated scare talk about the effects of Proposition 13 two years ago has tended to insulate California voters against pessimistic predictions. At any rate, a recent survey indicated that nearly 70 percent of those opposing Proposition 9 said that, in the light of a predicted recession, possible cutbacks in services and the solvency of state government were the prime reasons they were opposed to the Jarvis measure.

At this point, polls show Proposition 9 losing by a slight margin, despite the argument of its supporters that lost revenues would be largely made up by increased economic activity and by sales-tax revenues spent by people who saved on their income taxes. One way or the other, we will know the outcome shortly, and whether or not the Jarvis tax-slashing fever is beginning to pass. We hope it is.

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

ARROGANCE OF POWER

IT MEANS NEVER HAVING TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY

YEARS AGO Senator Fulbright wrote a book called *The Arrogance of Power*. The title was a good one. I thought of it during two recent events, events connected by the fact that both have to do with foreign policy and with America's apparently deliberate inability to understand anything beyond its borders.

The first event was the PBS decision to run the British film *Death of a Princess* and the reaction to that decision. The Saudi Arabian government was angry with Great Britain for running the show and asked the U.S. not to. The film is about the execution, for the crime of adultery, of a Saudi princess and her lover. It is certainly not a flattering portrait of Saudi life, and according to some Arabists and Islamic scholars it is not at all accurate, but accuracy of fact is only part of the problem. The decision to run the show is as tasteless as it would be to show a society ignorant of Christianity a film set in Inquisition times, or *The Deputy*, with the implication that this is how things are in the Christian world. Not that the Inquisition or the church's ugly caution under Hitler should be forgotten—they remind us of the evil which happens when people are uncritically loyal. But if someone ignorant of Christianity asked for information about Christianity, this is not where anyone without an ax to grind would begin, though in honesty he might have to end up there.

Americans are as ignorant as they could be about Arabs, and about Islam. Because of expensive oil, there are many people who are eager for images of Arabs which will confirm their prejudices. PBS has shown itself willing to give those prejudices (which currently have the status of an empty set in mathematics) some content. They get to do this in the name of free speech, on the empty-headed principle that if something can be done legally, then by God it *should* be done.

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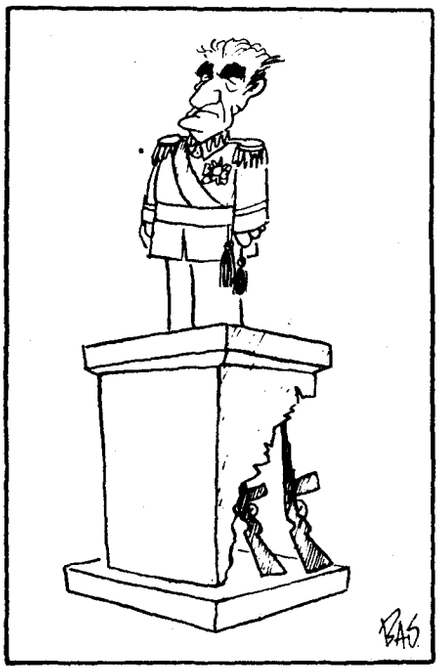

They are being opposed by congressmen who worry that ticked-off Saudis might respond by cutting off our oil; so they want to cut PBS funds. Mobil Oil has also asked that the film not be shown. A noble band. Thank God the Saudis are conservative—would the congressmen shake and shudder this way, or at least be seen to shake and shudder, if we imported oil from Russia?

They probably would. Gerald Ford wouldn't see Solzhenitsyn because it could offend the Russians. On the one hand PBS, whose basic rights aren't really in question, arrogantly defends a tasteless decision. On the other, congressmen whose last worry in the world is or was decent taste or international understanding are willing to interfere with free expression for craven reasons. There isn't anything edifying here.

The other event which brought Fulbright's title to mind was the attempted rescue of the American hostages in Iran. If the rescue had "succeeded" the lives of the Americans remaining in Iran would have been in danger: at the very least we would have had a new set of hostages. If the mission had not been aborted, a number of the hostages and their captors might have been killed. As it is, eight men died. The first Americans to die as a result of the hostage-taking died because of an American decision, not because of an Iranian one.

The American rage over the taking of American hostages is understandable, but it obscures a history we continue to ignore. While taking hostages is obviously dishonorable, it is even more dishonorable to support a man who tortured a nation for more than twenty years. This is what our government did. Our press was not nearly as good at reporting this as it has been about reporting its consequences.

Against good advice, Carter let the Shah into our country after his overthrow. This is what caused the embassy takeover. Carter, who took on responsibility for the failure of the rescue attempt, has yet to assume responsibility for the events which made the rescue seem necessary. But the fact is that the embassy takeover would not have happened if Carter had listened to people who were trying to be heard and who were ignored. Before the Shah was swept from office he visited Carter. During that visit, Iranians tired of torture and SAVAK surveillance demonstrated outside the White House, and our cops gave them a taste of teargas. It drifted into the White House gardens, and a few imperial tears were shed. Carter grinned, made a little joke of the thing, and apologized to the Shah for the inconvenience. Everything in our approach to the issue indicates that we expect Iran to forget all of this.

Carter has said that we have nothing to apologize for in Vietnam. He was a hawk, we should remember. He loved or professed to love the Shah. He acts as if the current Iranian madness happened from nowhere. Our leaders, as leaders will, insist on being free of any responsibility. They have criminally short memories, and invite us to join them in their amnesia. We will apparently have to go on rescuing people, killing our own and some of theirs in the process.

The immediate political alternatives are awful. Until a politically inspired conversion, and a badly timed one at that, Teddy Kennedy was willing to demonstrate his affection for the Shah. His brother did wonders for the man. Reagan doesn't have the defense of *realpolitik*; he still thinks it is positively a good thing that the Shah tried to rescue all those backward folk from their medieval ways.

If we look at the people who want to govern us and the records they offer as signs of their ability, we have every reason to despair. We have, given the record, nothing to look forward to but more stupidity, more unwisdom, the people who guessed badly then guessing just as badly in the future. Why should we give any of these demonstrably thick-headed people the power over our lives they ask for? I wouldn't want that power over your life, and I would hate you if you wanted it over mine. When Mandell Creighton suggested that Lord Acton lacked the proper deference toward kings and popes, who ought not to be judged the way we ordinarily judge one another, Acton responded with bewilderment: "For some mysterious reason you would spare these scoundrels," he wrote. It would be good to see reason play a role in politics. Since that doesn't seem even close to happening, rage over the horrible alternatives we are offered is more intelligent than a passive acceptance of the huge spoons the major parties are pushing toward our mouths.

Carter apologized to the Shah for the people who demonstrated against the Shah's tortures, and won't now apologize for what that evil man did. Reagan still defends the Shah. We never have anything to apologize for, not in

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Iran, not in Vietnam. Our love for the people whose cultures we refuse to understand really does mean never having to say we're sorry. God help us. We put the world in a tower, make everyone alive Rapunzel, scratch our own eyes out falling from the tower, and wander the world, forever the sad prince, innocent and misunderstood. Russia's steely will and our self-righteousness are the most dangerous things in the world right now.

JOHN GARVEY

Of several minds: *Thomas Powers*

THE MYSTERIOUS SPANIARD

A STORY ABOUT WAR

SOME YEARS AGO my father told me a story about war. It's not long. It goes like this:

In the 1920s a Spaniard appeared on the smart streets of Buenos Aires, a young man with an ancient name and no money. Buenos Aires is shabby and bitter now, but the city was in its springtime then and the Spaniard cut a dashing figure on the boulevards. He was tall, straight-haired, with quick, proud eyes and a cape which he swirled about him in the manner of a man accustomed to the glances of beautiful women. It wasn't until he drew close that you could see how young he was.

My father, only just 30 himself, ran the United Press bureau in Buenos Aires at that time, and the Spaniard came to ask him for a job. The UP office was small and cluttered, looking over a dark courtyard. From the ceiling lightbulbs dangled, the kind with clear glass and a faintly glowing filament. In the office gloom the Spaniard seemed as out of place as a cardinal in a cafe. But he spoke perfect Castilian Spanish, he could recite the great poets of Spain, and my father figured he could probably write a wire roundup as well as the next man, so he hired him. The Spaniard did not offer his personal history, and my father did not ask it.

With money in his pockets the Spaniard frequented the best cafes, but he always sat alone. He was often still there at two or three in the morning, a little pile of saucers in front of him, smoking thin cigarettes by the light of the street lamps as the *haute monde* of Buenos Aires strolled past. But no matter how late he stayed out at night, he always arrived on time for work in the morning.

The UP office was reached by a small, creaking elevator, an open cage which rose slowly up the center of the stairwell. No more than three or four people could crowd into the elevator at a time, but when the Spaniard rode the others always left him room. There was a formidable air about him, part bearing and part the simple strength of size and youth. The other UP staffers were neat, middle-class Argentinians, the sons of bank clerks and petty government officials. They wore white shirts and brown suits and at noon each man took his lunch from his briefcase, which was never used for any other purpose. They would not have dreamed of crowding close to the Spaniard.

In the office the Spaniard typed with two fingers but he wrote with a certain style, a kind of courtly lucidity, however humble the story. Even a report on grain prices was given the grand and formal air of a matter of state. Soon my father was assigning the Spaniard to larger stories, sending him out on interviews. His manner always gained him an entrance, even the proudest politicians treated him with respect, and he was soon well-known at a distinguished level of Argentinian society.

But an air of mystery lingered about the Spaniard too. No one knew his family or his city or his reasons for leaving Spain. His work gave him a wide acquaintance but he built no social life of his own. He was polite but aloof in the UP office; he always arrived alone and left alone at the end of the day. He was lively in conversation, intelligent, all but glowing with youth, but he did not seek out people, or make friends, or present himself at the houses of rich men with beautiful daughters. When the working day was over he retired to the cafes, always choosing a table close to the street where he might be seen. There he sat and watched the passers-by.

One evening my father chanced by and joined him. The Spaniard had a classical education and my father enjoyed his conversation. He lingered for an hour. At the end of it the Spaniard said, "Do you see that man?"

My father followed his glance. Strolling towards them was a handsome middle-aged man, tall and a bit heavy, with an ivory-handled cane. He wore a wide-brimmed, pearl gray hat, neatly brushed; gold studs gleamed at his cuffs; his English shoes were brilliantly polished. His expression was tranquil and intelligent, the look of a man who knows the world and has nothing to fear from it. As he drew near the man cocked his head slightly; a brief greeting, cool and knowing, touched his eyes and lips. He passed on.

"That man is my father," said the Spaniard. "I have come here to kill him."

Eventually my father learned the outline of the story. When the Spaniard had been young, not more than seven or eight, his father disappeared. One day he was there and that night he was not. There had been no quarrel, no explanation, and no provision for his family. He simply went. With his mother, a weeping, broken woman, the Spaniard moved into a tiny house at the end of a shabby street. Perhaps an uncle supported them. A little money came from time to time—not from his father; nothing came from his father—and they survived in genteel poverty. Their clothes grew shiny and threadbare. Shoes were lined with newspaper when the soles wore through. The Spaniard's lunch at school was bread and cheese, wrapped in paper. At night a single light-bulb burned. No one ever came to the house, and the Spaniard's mother never went out.

At first the Spaniard wept every night

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and prayed for his father's return. But at the end of a year he stopped crying, and swore that when he was a man he would kill him. Now he was a man, he had followed his father to Buenos Aires, and he intended to carry out his vow. But not quite yet. He wanted to give his father a chance to think things over, to feel the contempt in his son's delay. So the Spaniard haunted the best cafes on fine evenings, and waited till his father invariably passed, and then told him with his eyes and a little smile that he might have another day to live. This was the Spaniard's revenge; when he'd had his fill he would get up from his table one evening and draw a knife from beneath his cape and plunge it into his father at a point two inches below the belt buckle, where the belly is softest, and a wound takes longest to kill.

SOME MONTHS later a war broke out in the back country of Brazil. The government in Rio de Janeiro issued confident statements that the "bandits" were beaten, but the war dragged on and rumors from the back country said it was going badly. Vague reports circulated of massacres and government defeats. The UP office in Buenos Aires was asked if it might not find a way to slip a reporter into the Brazilian countryside across the Uruguay River. The Spaniard asked for the assignment. He said he spoke a bit of Portuguese, he was bored with office routine, he had never been to war and he burned to go. The sons of bank clerks and petty government officials were not at all eager to to, so the Spaniard was given the job.

Soon he was sending detailed dispatches from the border towns. Things were even worse than reported, he said; outside of the cities the rebels were in control, the death toll was terrific, ranches were burned, cattle run off. The government forces—badly armed, badly paid, and badly led—were on the brink of collapse. The Spaniard said he was heading for the interior, to find the rebel leaders.

After that his dispatches trickled off. The few which got through were brief, disjointed, sketchy in detail. They showed signs of having been passed from hand to hand, and the story they told was a kind of shapeless terror in the back country, battles and massacres which made no sense, had no pattern, seemed to be leading nowhere. Finally the dispatches halted altogether, and it was feared the Spaniard had been killed.

But then one day without warning the Spaniard returned. He was silent, worn and haggard. Even after a week's rest he could not bring himself to write about the war he had seen. Every attempt collapsed after a paragraph or two. He could find no way to begin. He sat in the gloom of the UP office, his two fingers poised over the typewriter, and stared at the yellow copy paper. Even speaking the Spaniard couldn't put things clearly into words. His sentences broke off in the middle. His hand trembled when he tried to light a match; despite months in the sun his face was ashen; his eyes flicked away from a direct glance; the hard lines of his face had softened, and he seemed younger.

He abandoned the effort to write about the war and returned to the grain market reports of his first days at the UP. He rarely spoke. He brought his lunch to his office, sat by himself to eat. He often arrived late for work. When his shift was over he lingered about the office, irresolute. He did not return to the cafes on the smart boulevards. The other journalists began to call him by his first name, and spoke to him softly. The Spaniard's smile was tentative and grateful. Between assignments—they were all of the smallest, most perfunctory kind—the Spaniard would sit at his desk, holding an elbow with one hand while the other passed over his face, kneading his forehead, rubbing his eyes as if weariness had blurred his vision.

At the end of a month the Spaniard came to my father and said he would be leaving. He had decided to return to Spain. His mother was old and needed him. They talked for awhile. The Spaniard seemed calmer now; the tension had gone out of him; he smoked a cigarette and described what he had seen in Brazil.

The war was terrible but no one had troubled him, he said. A rebel official gave him a pass and he rode deep into the countryside trying to find the rebel headquarters, so he might ask what the war was about. But the headquarters always seemed to be a day or two ahead of him. Often he met bands of rebel horsemen. They were rough back country people but they respected his pass. One day the Spaniard came to a small town where perhaps twenty of the rebels lounged in the only cafe.

The day was hot. The local townspeople were all hiding at home. The Spaniard had seen many terrible things by that time but the town was quiet, there had been no fighting, the rebels seemed too lazy with the sun to batter down doors in search of women. Horses waited patiently in the street, tails swishing at flies. Dogs nosed about. The Spaniard tried to ask directions but the rebels were vague; the leaders were a day to the North, perhaps two. The Spaniard sat with them in the cool of the cafe, under a kind of woven-rush awning, which dappled shadow over the tables and chairs and lounging men.

A dog sniffed toward them, tail wagging, and one of the rebels said, "Here, pup!" The dog edged forward. The man caught it by the scruff of the neck. He took a knife from his belt, made a deft, quick, shallow cut about the neck and down the dog's belly. It was the practiced work of a peasant. Then the man ripped off the dog's hide in one violent motion, peeling it back like the skin from a banana, and turned the yowling animal loose. It tore down the street, biting is own flanks, glistening in the sun. The Spaniard could see every muscle in the dog's flanks, the swelling of its ribs, the blue-white subcutaneous membrane.

The rebels all laughed and then one of the other men caught another dog and did the same thing, just as deftly. Soon the rebels were chasing dogs all over town and the air was filled with their yelping. The bloody pelts were scattered about the streets. By the end of the day the dogs lay dead everywhere, covered with dust and flies, oozing blood and fat in the sun.

The Spaniard never reached the rebel headquarters. He took his horse and returned the way he had come, past the burned ranches and the smoking towns. A week after quitting his job he sailed for home.

THOMAS POWERS

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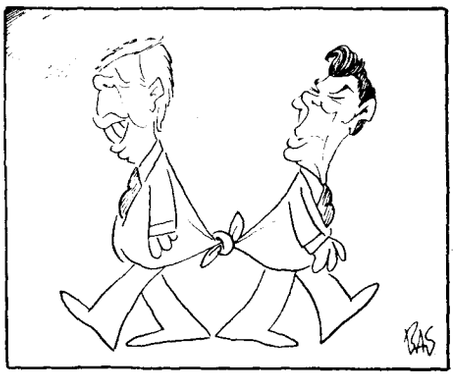
REWRITING THE '80 ELECTION SCRIPT



It's more than incompetence vs. stupidity

POPE McCORKLE

THE DOMINANT IMAGE of the 1980 election is coming into focus as Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan stack up delegates on the way toward their all but inevitable nominations. It looks as if the official critical view will present the contest as a farce between Carter the Incompetent and Reagan the Stupid. "Some irreverent baseball writer once said of a pending World Series that in his judgment neither team could win. It's tempting to look at the 1980 presidential campaign that way . . ." explained Tom Wicker in the *New York Times*.

If the year were 1920 instead of 1980, such a satiric notion would bring an essential touch of reality to the general perception of the political process. Back in the days of H. L. Mencken, lampooning presidential candidates served as refreshing liberation from old patriotic pieties. Today, however, this practice is becoming a pseudo-critical ritual which trivializes the contemporary political condition. Latter-day Menckenism suggests that American politics is suffering from a failure of technique (Carter's incompetence) on the one hand and a failure of raw intelligence (Reagan's stupidity) on the other. In so doing it inevitably downplays the enormity and complexity of the political crisis. The personal deficiencies of the present political leadership are highlighted, but the emerging breakdown in the political system itself is virtually ignored.

To concentrate on the lack of political leadership in the United States requires an astonishing degree of intellectual isolationism. In basic outline the same lack of clear political direction can be found throughout the Western world. The similarities are especially striking in Great Britain, Israel, and Canada. The recent pattern in all three countries has been an overflowing of discontent with the "incompetent" leadership of the more liberal party—the Laborites in England and Israel and Trudeau's Liberals in Canada. The reaction has brought to power the most right-wing elements of the opposing party or coalition—the Thatcherite Tories in England, Begin's Likud in Israel, and Clark's Progressive Conservatives in Canada. Their laissez-faire economic programs and hawkish handling of foreign affairs have generated even more discontent and paved the way for the extremely inauspicious return of the more liberal party.

A Reagan victory in 1980 then would signify the same right turn experienced in England, Israel, and Canada. Furthermore, the not-so-improbable revenge of the Democrats in 1984 would match the almost immediate about-face already made in Canada and perhaps soon to be followed in England and Israel. (A Trudeau-like victory-by-default for the Democrats, of course, might be more closely approximated by the election of a Kennedy instead of Carter.) Whatever the exact similarities and differences in the political situation, however, the major comparative point should be clear: the United States is not simply plagued by a peculiar failure in the quality of political leadership but is undergoing a crisis of political legitimacy that is common to other Western nations.

The refusal to place the 1980 election in this larger context betrays the optimistic sentimentality that lies underneath the contemporary facade of hard-headed political cynicism. For the failure to make the obvious comparison with other Western countries allows the old belief in America's unique destiny—otherwise known as the myth of American Exceptionalism—to remain in the prevailing critical image. The political condition is not perceived as a disease that the United States shares with its allies. Hope can still be held out that the day will be saved by a characteristically American resurgence of willpower and smarts—perhaps in the person of John Anderson.

The new pseudo-cynical sentimentality promises to become just as oppressive as the old political pieties. In 1980, therefore, it can be genuinely radical and liberating to argue that the presidential candidates are not as incompetent or stupid as most critical observers think. This is not to explain away Reagan's penchant for "gaffes" on the campaign trail and Carter's idiosyncratic "bungles" as president. But it is to suggest that the truly central failures of both candidates reflect

POPE McCORKLE *is working for one of the networks during the election campaign.*

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shortcomings in the political assumptions that they share with other mainstream Western politicians. Reagan's main weakness is not that he lacks the intelligence to persuasively articulate Old or New Right solutions to stagflation or the waning of the Pax Americana. *It is that these right-wing solutions cannot be persuasively articulated.* And Carter's main weakness is not that he lacks the competence to carry out centrist or moderate policies. *It is that centrist policies—i.e., those which attempt to avoid significant social changes—can no longer be competently carried out.*

Long before Ronald Reagan entered politics, the political theory of Western conservatism was hopelessly confused. Right-wing thought, for instance, points to state intervention as the source of economic inefficiency and stagnation; yet at the same time its demand for a massive military-industrial complex requires more centralized planning of the economy. Conservative theory also makes inexplicable leaps from the defense of individual liberties—the right to own a Saturday Night Special—to the enforcement of traditional community morality—prayer in the public schools and bans on pornography. Most importantly, conservatism lurches back and forth between a general wish to preserve the status quo and a programmatic commitment to turn the clock all the way back to a golden era of individualism. This debilitating political schizophrenia has certainly dampened the conservative revival in England, Israel, and Canada. And it is not too grandiose to believe that one of the key reasons why Ronald Reagan appears "stupid" is that he is vainly struggling with such weighty conservative contradictions.

Jimmy Carter, on the other hand, is saddled with a somewhat different ideological handicap. The more pragmatic assumptions of political centrists like Carter have never acutely suffered from the inherent contradictions found in conservatism. Nevertheless the center is no longer holding together too well; it even threatens to disintegrate before Carter can get re-elected. The success of centrist politics since World War II has depended on an alliance of sorts between the large corporation and the state's bureaucratic elite: the job of the former was to produce and accumulate wealth; the job of the latter was to negotiate a manageable distribution of the wealth between social classes as well as between "developed" and "underdeveloped" countries. With the militantly rising expectations of the Third World and the general economic downturn in the West, however, this pattern of economic production and political distribution has been dealt a severe shock. A growing disillusionment has been gathering around the politics of the best and the brightest, and charges of "incompetence" are heard around the world. The general discontent with elite expertise goes a long way toward explaining the desperation with which "stupid" right-wing notions about the production and distribution of wealth are now entertained in almost all Western countries.

Carter and his Georgians, of course, toyed with this damn-the-experts sentiment in 1976. "If Cy Vance is up for Secretary of State and Brzezinski is head of the National Security Council, then I'll leave Carter," promised Hamilton Jordan. But the Carter administration proved to be infested with members of the political establishment, most of whom the president had met while serving on that elite body known as the Trilateral Commission. Back in the heyday of centrist politics, only a limited sector of the middle class, and a usually smaller group of radicals, opposed the power of such groups. Yet Carter's problem is that a near majority of the electorate in 1980 seems fed up with the relative impotence of the elites. Over the last four years the slowdown and disorder in the Western economies have proceeded apace. Trilateral solidarity between the United States, Japan, and Western Europe in confronting the Third World has basically failed to materialize. What was once known as the American "power elite" is being symbolically held hostage by a cadre of Third World militants. Establishment figures like Vance and Brzezinski cannot agree on a common course of action. Increasingly it seems that not just Jimmy Carter but the ruling class itself it unable to rule.

Emphasizing Reagan's and Carter's insurmountable ideological plight by no means lets them off the critical hook. Ad hominem attacks against their stupidity or incompetence are actually much easier for the candidates to absorb and turn to their own advantage. Both campaigns, in fact, are already in the process of co-opting these charges. Whenever Reagan stumbles over a conservative contradiction, his advisers instinctively avoid the larger intellectual dilemma by pointing to Reagan's *personal* lack of understanding. (Asked why Reagan could not explain on ABC's "Issues and Answers" how this Kemp-Roth tax-cut policy would decrease inflation, economic advisor Jude Wanniski replied, "That was just confusion, because he wasn't briefed.") Carter campaigners like Vice President Mondale and Robert Strauss similarly use the "incompetence" issue to disguise the disintegration of centrist politics: they ascribe the Carter administration's undeniable lack of success not to growing impotence of ruling elites but to Carter's *personal* lack of experience. The clear implication is that Reagan would suffer from the same "incompetence," but Carter will not because he now has four years under his belt. Such strategies obviously entail some tactical losses. Yet they are much safer than acknowledging the fact that the center does not hold or that the right has no solutions.

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The chances for Nicaragua

WAYNE H. COWAN

POPE JOHN PAUL II's recent prohibition against the participation of priests in the political realm may well be having reverberations in Nicaragua, whose Provisional Government of National Reconstruction is probably the most clerical in the world, outside the Vatican itself. Or it may not. That is to say, no one at the moment seems to know exactly how the order will be applied. Does it refer only to active candidacies and certain other forms of participation in political parties and partisan politics? Is participation at the cabinet level different? Or would the Nicaraguan priest-cabinet members be covered under that part of the 1971 statement of the bishops' synod in Rome which says: ". . . unless, in concrete and exceptional circumstances, this is truly required for the good of the community and receives the permission of the bishop. . . ."

I suspect that those in the Nicaraguan situation are sitting fairly loose on this one. Within the last month, Father Ernesto Cardenal, Minister of Culture, visited Rome. Cardenal's satisfaction was evident when he told me that the Vatican's Secretary of State Agostino Casaroli indicated he was pleased with the priests' participation in the Nicaraguan government and that he appreciated the uniqueness ("exceptional circumstances"?) of the present situation there.

In addition to Cardenal, other priests in the cabinet include Miguel d'Escoto, a Maryknoll missioner, who is Foreign Minister, and Father Edgard Parrales, who is subdirector of the Social Security Institute. Fernando Cardenal, a Jesuit and brother of Ernesto, is director of the literacy campaign. Xavier Gorostiaga, a Spanish Jesuit economist, works in the Planning Ministry, and the Minister of Education is Carlos Tunnerman, an active Catholic layperson. It is interesting, as Ernesto Cardenal pointed out to me, that virtually all these posts are highly ideological.

The church is showing a special understanding of its role in creating the new Nicaragua. Its seven bishops issued a joint pastoral letter on November 17, 1979, four months after the revolution succeeded, that has been described as "a nuanced blueprint for continued collaboration of the church in the revolutionary process," including a frank discussion of the acceptability of socialism as an economic system compatible with Christian faith. During a recent visit there with eleven other journalists on an Oxfam-America-sponsored press tour, I heard Miguel d'Escoto, Foreign Minister and Maryknoll missioner, express worries about the role of the Latin American Conference of Bishops (CELAM). When asked if the church would revert to its former ways, he replied: "No, the church is moving. What is at stake is whether the bishops will remain in the Catholic church."

In numerous ways the Catholic church in Nicaragua speaks with the same voice as its sister churches in many parts of Central and South America. But it does so with a distinctive difference: the revolution against a tyrannical, bloody dictatorship has been won. Now, in the words of Father Alvaro Arguello, a Jesuit professor of history at Managua's University of Central America "the main thing is to be revolutionary and participate."

By now most *gringos* are aware that the successful insurrection was against General Anastosio Somoza Debayle and his dreaded National Guard. Fewer of us, however, are aware of the role the United States played in creating the almost fifty-year Somoza dynasty and in maintaining and using it when it suited our purposes. Here are a few of the central facts:

1. We established a virtual protectorate in Nicaragua at the end of the century's first decade when we sent in the Marines who remained almost continually for twenty-one years.

2. By the time we decided to remove them in 1933, the Marines had created a National Guard to protect our interests, and the U.S. ambassador named Anastasio Somoza Garcia, an ex-Philadelphia used-car salesman, to head it.

3. Somoza had himself elected president within a few years, but only after he did away with the only general who had opposed the U.S. occupation, Cesar Augusto Sandino, whom the U.S. dubbed a "bandit" and "outlaw." Somoza invited the legendary leader to Managua and had him executed.

4. In 1954 and 1961 Nicaragua served U.S. cold war interests by, in the first case, allowing the CIA to operate from there in removing Jacobo Arbenz, the democratically elected president of Guatemala, and, in the second case, by serving as a CIA staging area for the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. In return, the National Guard received proportionately the highest amount of U.S. training of any army in Latin America.

5. For over four decades the Somoza dynasty continued to aggrandize itself, reaching an estimated wealth of close to half a billion dollars, 25-30 percent of the nation's arable land, and

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ownership of twenty-six of Nicaragua's largest companies—all this while using rape, terror, massacre and other techniques of counter-insurgency as ordinary tools of governance.

U.S. involvement and support continued virtually to the end. When it became apparent that the Sandinistas were a serious opposition force, President Ford, late in his term, increased U.S. military aid by one-hundred percent. By then Somoza had learned to play the U.S. system like a well-tuned violin. When an attempt was made to cut off military-aid in 1977, he hired a public relations firm and, with the aid of the "Nicaragua lobby," proceeded to defeat the possible cut-off.

Nor could the private business and banking sector handle Somoza. Many of the business folk learned earlier that dealing with him on *his* terms was not a reliable way to make profits. The banks, on the other hand, stuck it out and got burned—or did they? Somoza's legacy was a soaring debt of $1.6 billion. Think of that; it takes over $600 million annually to service that debt. (Nicaragua's total exports run only a bit over $5 million annually). Over two-thirds of that total goes to private, commercial banks, which hold about half the total debt.

The new government has agreed to pay all the debts Somoza left behind. But, as Alfredo Cesar, Director of the International Fund for Reconstruction, told us: "We must be allowed to pay in terms we can handle." He said the issue is not the time allotted but the amount of interest required. Unfortunately, according to a United Nations report, "Many of the Somoza loans were on short terms with high rates of interest."

Little wonder then that the Economic Commission for Latin America has pointed to the international business community when discussing the national debt. Its conclusion is that the responsibility lies there for continuing to pour money into Somoza's coffers long after he had ceased to be credit-worthy.

WOULD THAT THAT were all. Unfortunately the new government confronts numerous other problems. To mention but three: (1) a forty-year failure to deal with public services; (2) the destruction of downtown, commercial Nicaragua, which is yet to be rebuilt after 1972's devastating earthquake, despite the fact that $250 million dollars in aid came from abroad, much of which Somoza personally benefited by; and (3) the widespread destruction from the eighteen-month war, which left the economy in ruin—factories bombed and/or dismantled, and agricultural conditions that prohibit normal crop output for perhaps two years.

Nicaragua needs help. In some ways it is perhaps the classic case of future third-world nations, throwing off an imperial-dictator ridden past, needing assistance to pursue its own independent course. Before the Sandinista triumph, there was fear in Congress that Nicaragua would become "another Cuba." Now, however, the fear is that all the dictatorships of central America will fall, each one a domino, each one becoming "another Nicaragua."

So the U.S. has some big decisions to make. The revolution in Nicaragua was not ideological; it was anti-Somoza. It was fought by all sectors of the society. The strongest, most popular forces to emerge from the insurrection are the more radical ones, but they have not unduly exploited their position of strength. They recognize the need for a mixed economy and for support from all sectors. Much effort has gone into developing a pluralistic government. This immediate period is one of uncertainty, but where the various forces—all of whom need each other and whose victory in the revolution grew from their unity—are still feeling one another out.

FOR MYSELF, I SURELY don't know clearly where Nicaragua is going. Two moderates have resigned from the Provisional Government, an event which was given the most sinister possible interpretation by some U.S. journals and by those in Congress whom the *New York Times* termed "doomsayers" who "ignore a corollary fact—that the junta has agreed to let the private sector fill the vacancies." Given the economic problems facing the government, technical skills and a pragmatic outlook are at a premium. In Nicaragua we talked with Enrique Dreyfus and Ismael Reyes, representatives of the private business, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors. We also spoke with the Marxist Minister of Agriculture Jaime Wheelock. There were differences between these viewpoints obviously, but they seemed of the negotiable sort, and in all cases the emphasis was on immediate problems and the need for practical solutions.

Sympathizers with revolutions like this one ought never close their eyes to flagrant violations of human rights, but there have been miraculously few in Nicaragua. There were some reprisals, but the junta allowed many of Somoza's National Guardsmen to go into exile and is trying to maintain high legal standards in bringing many others to trial. The death penalty has been abolished.

My visit gave me a full sense of many Nicaraguans' enthusiasm for building a new society. One cannot but be impressed with the careful approach to land reform, the deep commitment to overcoming illiteracy that has led over 80,000 high school and college students to volunteer to live with *campesinos* under the most primitive of conditions, the attempts thus far to remain open and pluralistic in form of government and not doctrinaire or rigid.

The battle is only nine months old, and the baby has hardly begun to walk. Given time, the necessary aid and no outside pressure, Nicaragua may be able to show us how an independ-

Two developments since the above was written: Following Vatican advice, Nicaragua's bishops have told priests in the government to step down as soon as possible. The priest-officials are meeting with the bishops. In the U.S., House appropriation of a $75 million package of aid and loans, earlier authorized by both the House and Senate, remains in doubt despite Nicaragua's appointment of two moderates to replace those who left the junta. Congressional pressures on Managua appear to be acerbating relations between Nicaragua and the U.S.

—THE EDITORS

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ent nationalism and a planned economy can combine to bring new life to a long downtrodden people. Even given the required assistance, the Nicaraguans may not succeed, but I'm willing to bet that they will. I'm also willing to bet that if the U.S. doesn't give the aid, if it "forces" Nicaragua to look elsewhere, we will have, in fact, "assisted" Nicaragua in becoming "another Cuba."

I picture another scenario, described in the words of Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), of the Hyde Amendment, during the debate on aid to Nicaragua last February: ". . . I want someone else to slam the door on the loss of Nicaragua. There is a Catholic church down there. There is a private sector, however beleaguered. There is a press, more or less free. I want to nurture these things, not extinguish them."

WITH CROSSES & HOLY WATER, IDENTIFYING A MYSTERY

At the hour of our death

SILVER DONALD CAMERON

"THE LORD be with you," said Father Dan, lifting his hands in a graceful gesture.

"And also with you," responded the village.

In the polished wooden coffin lay the silent figure of Artie Samson, 54, electrician and neighbor, abruptly launched into the mystery.

Our little island has had too many funerals just lately. Old Annie MacDonald lost her sinewy battle against death only a couple of weeks ago, at the age of 93. On the morning of Artie's funeral the priests had been to the neighboring village of Petit de Grat, to bury a little boy struck down by a car. That same morning our own village was jolted by the death of Chesley Macdonald, dropped by a heart attack at 41, beheading a family with four small children.

I am not Catholic—which makes me almost unique in D'Escousse—but I generally go to the funerals. In some unfathomable way this village had laid its hands on my heart, made me part of itself, and this is how the village purges its grief. In all of eternity there was only one Artie Samson. There will never be another. He lived among us, and we knew him and cared for him, and now he is gone. We have gathered here to contemplate these facts.

"Lord, hear our prayers," Father Dan asks, "and be merciful to your son Artie."

Wherever you went this weekend, people paid their own tributes to Artie, as they did to Annie, as they would to Chesley. *Artie would always give you a help. Artie was honest. Artie was good at his work.*

At the gas station, Hazel Britten remembered his care in putting her washer and dryer in place, how he got them flat against the wall even though it took extra work to do it. "And if he made even the smallest mess," she declared, "he *always* cleaned it up. Now, how many workmen do that?"

"He had had a heart attack already," mused Ernest Poirier of Nu-Way Radio TV. "He had inherited some money, too, you know, he could have sat back and taken it easy. Probably I would have done that, or you would have. Not Artie. No way! He was always a worker, Artie."

Yes, and I have my memories too. I remember calling Joe MacNeil to check over the wiring in a building. Joe took one look at the wires running straight as pencils, neatly stapled every sixteen inches, and said, "I seen all I need to. That wiring's perfect. Artie Samson done it."

Godfrey Gaudet and I were trying one night to fit a copper housing around the rudder shaft of my boat. We couldn't get it watertight; only silver solder, it seemed, would do the trick. So we went to Artie's house at the head of the wharf, and Artie soldered it up. Silver solder is not cheap but he wouldn't even allow me to replace what he'd used. "Glad to help," he said, and waved his hand and grinned.

Artie was a slender, handsome man. His wife Clarisse, whom I see every day at the post office, is a merry and attractive woman. She kneels now, crying quietly, in a front pew.

Remember Artie, whom you have called from his life. In baptism he died with Christ; may he also share his resurrection. . .

I am becoming much too familiar with the funeral Mass.

EVERYONE is here. I ran into Artie on Friday, at the hardware store; that night he called at my house to return something his niece had borrowed, and by the next sunrise, his heart had stopped. John LeBrun, who owns the hardware store, is sitting here with his wife. Don Boudreau, from the high school. Marshall Bourinot, printer and historian, and his wife, Ina. Simon Samson, who built the shed I have spent my

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spare time enlarging. Pretty Paula Doyle, 17, who has been driving the family car ceaselessly since she got her license. Mathilde Landry, principal of the elementary school. Anita Joyce from over the road, Artie's third cousin. Paul Fougere, 10, my next door neighbor and assistant carpenter. Leonard Pertus, last of our sailing-ship skippers, who has interrupted a hunting trip for the funeral. The skipper will be 87 on Friday.

"Artie paid his bill at Landry Brothers Friday, said he wanted to pay all his bills before he died. He was only joking, sure, but it's a queer thing all the same . . ." Benny Landry is here.

The pallbearers: Claude Poirer, from the Esso station, Mark Bonin, artist of the front-end loader, solemn in their best clothes . . .

The church, a modern brick building which replaces the great old wooden church which burned twenty-two years ago, the church is full.

There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me, so that where I am, you may be too . . .

Art Terrio, retired from the Fisheries Department, reads from the Gospel. His wife Mimi read at old Annie's funeral.

Four priests: old Father Albert Doucet, from West Arichat; Father Jimmy Mombourquette, who after nearly a decade in D'Escousse moved just last year to the neighboring parish of Louisdale; Father J.J. MacDonald of Richat, a huge Scot, president of the Nova Scotia Credit Union League, fluently bilingual; and Father Dan.

Dan Doucet is nobody's idea of an Acadian parish priest. Thirty-five years of age, with a beard and a flowing mane of black hair. I know him well, but as a friend and ally rather than a cleric: a quiet activist, an effective youth worker, a summer student at the Esalen Institute of California, a puzzled pilgrim, a good man with whom to drink rum and sing lustily.

But this is another Dan. This is not my friend with the human perplexities and confusions; this is a supremely graceful, artistic celebrant of the Eucharist, the central mystery of the Christian faith. Like a superb dancer, this white-robed figure moves with assurance and compassion through the intricate choreography of the Mass, and suddenly I am struck, as I have been before, by the profound understanding Catholicism shows towards the needs of human beings for familiar ritual and established ceremony.

When one of our people dies, he is "waked" by mourners who carry out a vigil by the casket, usually in the church, while the friends and relatives come, pay their respects, and express their fellowship. Then this Mass, which Dan does not perform by rote but infuses with mingled sorrow and resignation, in which we gather as a community to say our farewell. After this cathartic event, the waters of life will begin to flow into the gap where Artie once stood, and the process of healing will have a right to begin. The Mass seals Artie's death, and thus helps us move beyond it.

In a moment of revelation, I grasp the importance, the honor, of the priestly function. We need this process. It brings home to us the reality of what has happened, and holds us steady while we confront these awesome facts.

Father Mombourquette speaks the eulogy. *I am going now to prepare a place for you.* Death is not, for the Christian, an entirely sorrowful event. Our sorrow is for ourselves, not for Artie. Father Mombourquette speaks of the splendors of Heaven, the perfection of the next life. "Help us always to remember," he prays, "that life is short, and the day of our death is known to you alone." Death is an occasion for us to contemplate our own lives, the extent of our readiness when we are—as we will inevitably be—called home ourselves.

For me, this is not difficult. My father died young, when I was only 14, and since then life has always seemed to me precarious, and death a constant possibility. I intend to live to be a hundred, but if I die tomorrow, I am ready.

I find I am having a small vision.

It occurs to me that I do not want eternal life, any more than I would want perennial wakefulness without sleep. I can conceive of no life more perfect than this one, and mentally I float out of the village church, to the dramatic play of sun and cloud over the autumn landscape, the sea, the islands, the enfolded harbor. It shakes me to contemplate the towering beauty of the world out there, the fellowship of human community, the magnificence and poignancy of love, the sturdy courage of men and women walking every day a further mile along the road that leads to the grave. But if it did not lead to the grave, would life have that unbearable sweet wonder which draws me so powerfully towards tears?

Dan Doucet holds a little mace-like affair made of silver, with which he sprinkles water over the white cloth that covers the coffin.

"In memory of our baptism we use this holy water, and call on the Lord Jesus to welcome Artie into the glory of eternal life."

He hands the mace and the water to one of the village children who is also wrapped in a white robe; on the other days he performs kamikazi feats with a bicycle and terrorizes the poultry. Dan takes a silver censer, smoke issuing from its scrollwork, and walks around the coffin, swinging it toward Artie's remains as he goes.

"As a sign of respect for our brother Artie, we let this incense rise to God, who has called him to share in His glory."

Water, Dan and incense! What puny, insignificant gestures on which to rest our hopes of uniting with the forces that rule the cosmos! How trivial! How childlike!

I am traveling up and away from the church at the speed of light, watching myself and my people diminishing like ice in a furnace, till we have shrunk to sparrows, to flies, to nothing at all—busy and invisible and trivial as atoms, particles of energy which form and vanish too quickly to measure. Artie is dead, sweet Clarisse will die, you and I are rotting where we stand. We flicker like candles, and like candles we gutter into darkness. Our culture and languages are fading away. Continents will sink and new continents rise. As the universe traverses its endless flux, the planet and humanity itself will be annihilated.

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Our great loves, our global crises, our games of art and war stand as nothing against the infinite backdrop of mystery.

And we dare to describe and measure and name the forces that drive the mystery; we name them by the names of our gods and our God; we promise one another life everlasting and call on the universe to treasure our fleeting existences as we treasure them ourselves. With our crosses and censers and holy water we seek to identify with a mystery so vast we cannot even imagine its fringes. Absurd, capering satellite of a minor star in a minor galaxy!

But what else are we to do? The playwright Samuel Beckett does not trust language, yet he continues to use it. Why? they asked, and he answered, *Que voulez-vous, m'sieu? Il n'y a pas de l'autre*. What would you have me do, my friend? There *is* nothing else.

O Lord, runs one of the greatest of the prayers, *be with us now and at the hour of our death*. And be with Artie Samson, for he was one of us, and we loved him. *Il n'y a pas de l'autre*.

Stage

UNHAPPY FAMILIES

MIXING LAUGHTER & CLICHÉ

WHEN I saw *Morning's at Seven* the other afternoon, I was surrounded by playgoers for whom Paul Osborn's 1920s Midwestern town must have been a foreign country. On one side a slightly baffled teen-age couple seemed to miss the nuances of the clichés Osborn so lovingly fondles; on the other three Spanish-speaking women translated among themselves, their joint contributions intensifying whenever the plot took a new turn. Both groups seemed to be enjoying themselves, a testimony to the dramatic vitality of a comedy which, indifferently received in 1939, has become a staple of American regional theaters. And a Broadway success in 1980.

The marvel of *Morning's at Seven* is that it uses and at the same time makes fun of the commonplaces of small-town life. Sibling rivalry, jealousy, infidelity, illicit sex, the gnawing sense of failure—all these are the material of popular drama on stage, screen and television. In Paul Osborn's play, however, they are the ingredients of a family comedy in which they have no greater weight in the texture of the play than Thor's dislike of bananas, Arry's skill with the needle. There are moments of pathos in the play, although they have a way of teetering into laughter, and the commanding reality of the work lies not in the fear and the pain that lurk behind the amiability, but in the sure sense of continuity the play conveys. The characters are broadly conceived and played on the edge of caricature, but so are most of my relatives. So am I, for that matter.

There are some mildly discordant notes in the production. Maureen O'Sullivan's Esty retains too much of the actress's English accent to fit neatly into this Midwestern family. Nancy Marchand's Ida is slightly jackknifed as though she were about to leap off the high board, but I suspect the mannerism is not Ida's, but an acting or directorial attempt to establish a physical difference between the two tall sisters, placing her obliquity against the rigid straightness of Elizabeth Wilson's Arry. Teresa Wright's Cora, my favorite among the sisters, says "I hate Arry" with such force at one point that I was afraid that she might explode Osborn's neat package. These are incidental blemishes however; for the most part the four actresses and the rest of the talented cast play extremely well together, an acting company that conveys a family in every sense of the word. Now and then, one of the performers plays a bit too broadly, as though to say, *look I'm being funny*—a tendency that may increase as the run goes on—but generally they simply are funny, as though by chance. The accidental comedy of Midwestern life—and a great deal of it is not accidental at all—is used consciously (I would say *artistically* but I am not sure that the ATCA rules allow that adverb in conjunction with a folksy play) by Paul Osborn to present an affectionate portrait of a Midwestern family which is also a comic comment on the verisimilitude of regional drama and the earnestness of popular psychology.

When I was writing *American Drama Since World War II* twenty years ago, I turned to *Morning's at Seven* to explain my discomfort with plays like William Inge's *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* which were so solemn about the clichés that Osborn uses so comfortably. Every time a character wandered the 1950s stage in search of his TRUE SELF, I thought of Carl's "Where am I?" and "fork-of-the-road" spells in *Seven* and put the lost character into an ironic context that his author never intended. Times and tastes have changed, but *Morning's at Seven* can also be used as a contrast to the current crop of family plays. Both laughter and cliché are central to Neil Simon's *I Ought to Be in Pictures* and James Lapine's *Table Settings*, but in neither case does the mixture work for me as it does in *Morning's at Seven*.

The family in the Simon play is a broken one and—unless we count the father's woman friend and the dead grandmother with whom the daughter talks—it is hardly an extended family in the Osborn sense. The plot of *Pictures* brings the spunky, pushy daughter to Hollywood in search of the father who walked out on the family when she was a small child. Libby, who pretends to want to get into pictures, really wants to find her father so that she can find herself, and Herb, a screen writer on lean times, not only acquires a daughter but breaks his writing block in the process. Both speak characteristically funny lines (Herb left his wife because she had no sense of humor), but the one-liners are only defensive weapons, masks to the underlying angst. Ron Leibman, who plays Herb, has become so adept at the collapse from wit to sentimentality that when we see his face and body begin to sag we know that he will soon be a lovable lump of schmaltz waiting for someone to spread him on a matzo. The difficulty with *I Ought to Be in Pictures* is that, although Simon wants his laughs, he seems to take his clichés seriously. Herb, resolutely at typewriter for the

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final curtain, is simply facing the dark at the top of the stairs. Oh, Carl, where are your spells?

Table Settings is quite another kettle of gefüllte fish. Not a play so much as a series of sketches, identified by voice-over joke titles, it is a compendium of Jewish mother, six-martini professional, drug dropout, teen-age girl and stage brat gags. It is an extremely popular show although I do not know why, but then *Three's Company* fails to keep me glued to my television. All the performers punch their lines, presumably—since the author is also the director—to assure that the cartoon quality of the script will never be allowed to lapse into humanity. After all the characters (Younger Son, Older Son, Girlfriend) have labels, not names. Lapine's play is certainly not serious about its clichés, but it also lacks warmth, affection, sentiment, all the qualities that allow *Morning's at Seven* to suggest the substance beneath the laughter.

Tolstoy told us years ago that "every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." The way of Esty, Ida, Cora and Arry is theatrically the most rewarding.

GERALD WEALES

Screen

STAR SNORES

THE EMPIRE STRIKES OUT

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK is kung fu in the sky. Almost all of its nearly two-hour running time is one, interminable fight scene. First there's the fight for survival when Han Solo (Harrison Ford) has to rescue Luke Skywalker (Mark Hammill) while Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) bites the ends of her braids back at base. Then there's the fight in the snow when the Empire, still under the leadership of Darth Vader (David Prowse, with voice by James Earl Jones), attacks the ice planet, Hoth. Then the fight in the asteroid belt. The fight to escape from the dinosaur's belly. The fight to escape from the mining colony. Luke's fight to save Han. (Too late?! But wait.) Leia's fight to rescue Luke. And precipitating and culminating all the other fights, woven into, out of and around them all, is the fight of the millennium between Luke and Darth Vader.

Like the original *Star Wars*, the sequel combines the unimaginable future with the primordial past. You may wonder how director Irving Kershner, screenwriters Leigh Brackett and Laurence Kasdan, and producer George Lucas, who originated the *Star Wars* series, can get onto film a future they can't imagine. They do so by leaving most of it out. On the planet Hoth, for instance, everyone rides across the snow on creatures that seem to be part kangaroo, part horse and part mastodon. But we only catch fleeting glimpses of them at a distance or see a flared nostril or wild eye in close-up on the side of the screen. The rest of the beast is left to *our* imaginations. Though this is fair enough, there is a larger sense in which the whole movie is made this way, out of details drifting through space without coherence or structure like debris from some exploded galaxy.

What is at stake in the universal war between the Imperial and Rebel Forces is as incomprehensible as the technology being used to wage it. There is, in the most fundamental sense, no moral order in this universe. The universe is reduced to violence in a void. This is what the kung fu movies also did, plunging us into remote and exotic cultures where all we could do was sit back and enjoy the thrills. Like the kung fu movies, *The Empire Strikes Back* purposely limits our comprehension of its plot in order to make the violence more pure and, therefore, pleasurable.

In order to compensate for its inability to give the future much personality or character, the movie also reaches far back into the past. To balance its unimaginably distant future, it has to go very far back, to prehistory. All the beasts with which the Rebels have to do battle seem to be survivors of the Jurassic period—an Abominable Snowperson in an ice cave on Hoth, a brontosaurus shoehorned into a hole in an asteroid where Han and Leia go spelunking in the Millennium Falcon, etc. The boot camp to which Luke is sent for advanced training as a Jedi Knight is in a primeval swamp, the sort of place from which life itself first arose. Luke's drill sergeant there is a wizened leprechaun who looks like Kermit the Frog and sounds like Cookie Monster because he is the creation of Frank Oz, a long-time collaborator on the Muppets. The Middle Ages are about as close to the present as the film's characters are allowed to go. That's where *Star Wars* gets the single combat between Luke and Darth Vader, with laser beams as broadswords. But on its way to the Middle Ages this time, the plot has a lay-over in Greece to pick up some new twists from Oedipus.

Since *The Empire Strikes Back* isn't really trying to prophesy the future, it has to mystify it. Intriguing and persuasive prophecies are the province of science fiction, and that's not what this movie is. It is aiming at some larger statement than science fiction can make, and at making it to a larger audience. (Real science fiction is about as awe-inspiring as a whodunit, and plays to the same sort of cult audience.) All this hokum from the primeval past lends a touch of magic to events. The past is mythic, and here it lends its mythic powers to the future. It allows the characters to communicate with one another by telepathy when all other systems of communication fail. It pre-empts the air waves. Thus does Obi-Wan Kenobi (Alec Guinness) counsel Luke, and Luke cry out to Leia for help, and Darth Vader appeal to Luke to come over to the Dark Side of the Force.

So what does it all add up to in the end? Nothing. That's the trouble. There's no plot. For all its technology and its arsenal of special effects, its panoply of episodes ranging from the dawn of man to the twilight of the universe, *The Empire Strikes Back* still needs a human story in order to succeed. And this is the one thing they forgot to include in its survival kit. The love interest between Han and Leia is, like the

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camaraderie between R2-D2 and C-3PO, played the way established relationships are in a sitcom. It's just on-going floss. It's all carping and back-chat, a joke that's being milked for all it's worth. Now that Lucas and his collaborators know who goes to these films (i.e., everybody), they are trying to make sure the human relationships in them are broad enough to reach the whole audience. Every wisecrack is delivered so slowly that even Chewbacca (Peter Mayhew) has time to register it. Speaking of Chewy, Leia quips at Han, "I'd rather kiss that walking fuzzball. . . ." (Pause, during which Chewy yowls a little.) Han: "Aw, come on. You love me because I'm a scoundrel. . . ." (Or some such retort . . pause. . . .)

What really brings down the whole house of bubble-gum cards is that Lucas has decided to turn *Star Wars* into a genuine serial. Not a succession of sequels, but a serial, like the old *Buck Rogers* or *Tom Corbett, Space Cadet,* where each episode creates more plot developments than it resolves. The idea is to leave you hanging in the midst of a crisis so you'll "tune in again next time, fans, when we'll find out whether Luke gets Han out of the cryogenic carbon freezer. Will Han be able to rescue his friend? Will he return to Jedi school like a good boy? Will Darth Vader really turn out to be his Dark Father?" All these questions, raised in the course of the first hour of *The Empire Strikes Back,* are left hanging at the end of the second hour, when the movie abruptly ends. Oh, no. I can see it coming: the future. Now we're going to get another installment of *Star Wars* every summer until the end of time.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

THE NEWER POETRY OF THOMAS KINSELLA

Muck, matter, & an enclosing heart

FLOYD SKLOOT

THE IRISH POET Thomas Kinsella, born in 1928, has by now published a distinguished body of work, important to the literature of his country. He has received rewards and honors and has been called "perhaps the most seriously talented Irish poet since Yeats" by Calvin Bedient. And yet, more recently, Bedient has complained that Kinsella has "brooded himself to pieces." A clear break in Kinsella's poetic development is embodied in two collections, *Poems 1956-1973* and *Peppercannister Poems 1972-1978*, published last year by Wake Forest University Press.

The earlier poems were characterized by traditional, formal logic and structure, narrative drive, and rich description. Their language was packed and lush, rigidly controlled, and they dealt with "the swallowing and absorption of bitterness." The later poems, after 1972 but anticipated by some tendencies as far back as 1965, the year Kinsella came to America, are characterized by apparent formlessness, a charged, compressed, associative language—a language of trance or automatic writing—and a difficult density.

Poems 1956-1973 offers the poems that established Kinsella's reputation, the anthology pieces like "Mirror in February" or "Wormwood." It is the more accessible and polished work, traditional for its first two-thirds and, as this excerpt from "Office for the Dead" shows, sure in its grasp:

> The grief-chewers enter, their shoes
> hard on the marble,
> In white lace and black skirts, books
> held to their loins.
> A silver pot tosses in its chains as they
> assemble
> About the coffin, heavy under its
> cloth, and begin.
>
> Back and forth, each side in nasal
> unison
> Against the other, their voices grind
> across her body.
> We watch, kneeling like children, and
> shrink as their Church
> Latin chews our different losses into
> one.

Kinsella's Catholicism, his sense of Irish history and literature and his rigorous belief in the restorative power of love are important forces shaping the early poetry. So too are the lessons of his obvious masters, Auden and Eliot. But also important, and ultimately perhaps the strongest shaping force, was Kinsella's career in the Ministry of Finance. For nearly twenty years—day after day, all day—Kinsella worked with ever-increasing responsibility in the administration of his country's economy, seeing first-hand the complexity of important decisions, handling and sorting out multitudinous material. His long poem near mid-career, "Nightwalker," explores this world:

> Spirit-skeletons are straggling into
> view
> From the day's depths. You can pick
> them out
> In the night sky, with a little patience:
> Pale influences . . .
> The wakeful Twins,
> Bruder und Schwester
> —Two young Germans I had in this
> morning
> Wanting to transfer investment income;
> The sister a business figurehead, her
> brother
> Otterfaced, with exasperated smiles
> Assuming—pressing until he
> achieved—response.
> Handclasp; I do not exist; I cannot
> take

FLOYD SKLOOT, *associate editor of the Chowder Review, has published poetry in* Shenandoah, Southern Poetry Review, Prairie Schooner *and the* Literary Review. Rough Edges, *his first collection of poems, appeared in 1979.*

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My eyes from their pallor. A red glare
Plays on their faces, livid with little splashes
Of blazing fat. The oven door closes.

More than subject matter, this environment provided Kinsella with method and structure. The influence of his administrative career, and its particular form of hands-on involvement with his country, can be seen in his passion for arrangement ("the passion is in the putting together") and organization, his commitment to order and shape, the intellectual discipline and scope of material that characterize this phase of his material. It is also consistent with his concern for his country's living history, which found expression in significant translation activity.

Forced by his environment to be self-tutoring, moved by circumstance and inclination to identify the traditions that would support his endeavor, Kinsella found forms for his "will that gropes for/ structure." Composed and well-assembled, such poems as "A Country Walk," "Downstream" and "Ballydavid Pier" are undeniably effective works of their kind. The pivotal poem, at once culmination and emblem of this vein of writing, is "Phoenix Park"—a poem of departure and new beginnings. It is the final large effort, with its rigid structure of eleven-syllable lines, narrative framework, formal logic and continuity. It enacts the process by which achieved order gains its quality through its very precariousness ("Fragility echoing fragilities"), acknowledges that being subject to momentary extinction does not diminish the intensity of our personal solutions to "the ordeal." It is a poem of such size and comprehensiveness in terms of the poet's vision that, especially taken together with "Nightwalker," it brings Kinsella to a halt, a point at which he can either repeat himself for the duration of his enterprise or strike off in new directions.

Peppercannister Poems 1972-1978 are named after the private publishing enterprise established by Kinsella across the Grand Canal from St. Stephen's Church, which is known as the Peppercannister. In them he breaks dramatically from what supported his earlier writing. After "Phoenix Park," in his *New Poems* of 1973, Kinsella produced the sequence entitled "Notes from the Land of the Dead" that inhabits a different territory altogether. "Hen Woman" lays it out:

There is no end to that which,
not understood, may yet be noted
and hoarded in the imagination,
in the yolk of one's being, so to speak,
there to undergo its (quite animal) growth,
dividing blindly,
twitching, packed with will,
searching in its own tissue
for the structure
in which it may wake.

The poems begin to deal with the emergence of these living things hoarded in the poet's imagination, emerging randomly, the impulse to write shaping itself rather than being shaped from outside. Kinsella intends to transfer the shaping energy back where it belongs, within the impulse rather than imposed. He deals in processes and in planes of consciousness where anticipated connections are not always possible and therefore not insisted upon:

I tinker with the things that dominate me
as they describe their random
persistent coherences . . .
clean surfaces shift
and glitter among themselves . . .

Inward-turning, mythic, full of creatures like lizards, leopard sharks, morays, pigs and mean cats, these poems delve into lower orders of life or awareness and assume "the beginning/ must be inward. Turn inward. Divide."

Few poets risk what Kinsella risks both in his new method and in his refusal to repeat the effort upon which his substantial reputation rested. Transition completed, Kinsella began producing in limited editions his Peppercannister pamphlets and for seven years his work was largely unseen in America:

A few times in a lifetime, with luck,
the actual *substance* alters: fills with
expectation, beats with a molten glow
as change occurs; grows cool; resumes.

There is a pause at the full
without currents or wind. The shorescape
holds its thousand mirrors and waits.
Weed rustles in a cleft
and it is not the wind. In a nearby pool
elements of memory are stalking one another.

The first four Peppercannister poems are occasional pieces. *Butcher's Dozen* is a response to an inquiry into the 1972 shooting of thirteen civil rights demonstrators. *A Selected Life* and *Vertical Man* are in tribute to composer Sean O Riáda and *The Good Fight* is for the tenth anniversary of the death of John F. Kennedy. The Wake Forest book provides some twenty-five pages of Kinsella's prose commentary on these poems, rich in useful detail.

The final four Peppercannisters return to the sequence begun after "Phoenix Park," extending the "Notes from the Land of the Dead" and arriving, finally, at a moving poem in memory of Kinsella's father—"The Messenger"—that understands the process of loss and grief:

A cross grain of impotent anger. About it
the iridescent, untouchable secretions
collect. It is a miracle:

membrane and mineral in precious combination.
An eye, pale with strain, forms in the dark.
The oddity nestles in slime

functionless, in all its rarity,
purifying nothing. But nothing can befoul it
—which ought probably to console.

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These four Peppercannister poems are available here for the first time and reveal the gains he has made through his new approach. Chief among these gains is a relaxation of his impulse to order—not an abandonment of order, but a yielding to implicit order within the material ("a nexus a nexus/ wriggling with life not of our kind").

It is difficult to convey, second-hand, the feel of the connectedness of Kinsella's newer work, the unity of imagination and its muse, the effect of its recurring symbols and characters, or how acceptable and correct it seems to find the poet imagining himself *prior to*, at the point of, and in the phases just after conception:

> They lie face up in the grass, not touching,
> head close to head, a woman and her secret husband.
> A gossamer ghost arrows and hesitates
>
> out of the reeds, and stands in the air above them
> insect-shimmering, and settles on a bright
> inner upturn of her dress. The wings
>
> close up like palms. The body, a glass worm,
> is pulsing. The tail-tip winces and quivers:

I *think* this is where I come in . . . The muck and matter, the elemental juice of origin, dithering "in and out of a mother liquid" and venturing down near "the heart of the pit" are the stuff of these poems. Egg and raw substance. The cumulative effect is one of great intimacy with poet and material, almost the opposite of the formal and distant character of the earlier work. Yet in its difficult surface, the new poetry is initially forbidding and quirky.

In the sixth Peppercannister poem, *A Technical Supplement*, Kinsella observes that, "the mind flexes./ The heart encloses." It would not be unfair to extrapolate this formula to cover the two Wake Forest volumes or the two phases of his career. Initially, Kinsella's poems were the product of a mind flexing—not that they lacked feeling or emotional force. They were first-rate examples of a learned and mastered traditional craftsmanship. The newer poems, though, seem the product of an enclosing heart. Form is dictated by the material at hand, the poems are made to enclose whatever seems to demand being present ("outlandish/ the things that will come into your mind"), and there is a persistent belief that "Somehow it all matters ever after—very much—/ though each little thing matters little/ however painful that may be."

The pattern of Kinsella's career is not unique among poets of his generation. Much has been written about the changes and distinct phases in the careers of James Wright, W. S. Merwin or Philip Levine. But the poetry, the range of pleasure and engagement a reader will discover in these volumes, is exceptional, an undertaking of enormous reach.

Books: THE CHURCH BETWEEN THE WARS

THE SURVIVAL OF AMERICAN INNOCENCE:
CATHOLICISM IN AN ERA OF DISILLUSIONMENT, 1920-1940

William M. Halsey

Univ. of Notre Dame, $16.95, 230 pp.

Dennis O'Brien

"ABSTRACT WORDS such as glory, honor, courage . . . were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the number of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and dates." Thus did Ernest Hemingway bid farewell to the rhetoric of armies and with it American illusions of moral innocence. William M. Halsey's excellent book shows how and why American Catholics maintained "innocence" while a generation of writers, artists and intellectuals became increasingly "lost" on the far side of paradise. *Commonweal* spoke for a broad Catholic sensibility when its reviewer in 1925 judged *The Great Gatsby* "mediocre," concerned with "a sordid, cheap, little crook." Francis X. Connolly gave the rationale: the "hero" depicted by ex-Catholics Hemingway and Fitzgerald is ". . . a thing acted upon rather than an actor," one who lacks "splendor of mind." In the midst of a cynical period, American Catholics from the production line to the avant-garde agreed with a *Commonweal* editorial of 1928:

> That man lives to expand courageously his vision of reality; that the universe is a garment of God made for his holiday, and not a snare or an illusion; that laughter is the fife of victory and not the shriek of hopelessness—these things have been held sacred in America for 300 years or more.

The stock scenario of modern history locates World War I as the occasion of sin for the American fall from grace. If Catholics maintained innocence after that war, it was partly because they did not share in its expectations. Woodrow Wilson may have preached the war as a "Great Crusade" but, as Halsey notes, "Irish Catholics did not go to war to defend Anglo-Saxon culture. German Catholics . . . objected to the propaganda that the war was a defense of 'the great and holy cause of liberty.' Poles, Italians and Central Europeans did not cross the Atlantic to evangelize their homelands." Lacking the pieties which sustained the war effort, Catholics were not as susceptible to *dis*illusioning. "Romanist Joe, the mechanic . . . went to France not to make the world safe for Democracy, but to see Paris," was the comment of a sour Protestant cleric.

In a sense, Catholics began the twen-

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John Garmon

A Husband All Day

Though you told me through tears
there would be times we would look
back on this and not be so serious
I am sure we don't believe each
other everyday. Or, why should we?
There are the lies that make happiness.
If we always tell the truth, we will
be too exhausted to enjoy ourselves.

I am steady. I keep trying. Some
days I think I'll give it up, but
I have this almost genetic trait
for bearing up, waiting, seeing
it through. There is something to
be said, after all, for compensation.
And you help me contend with all
the day, the whole day, and I help
you get through it, too, sometimes,
though I'm better to be helped
than one to help.

Husbands have always been villains.
Maybe this is part of our value.
Who would want a perfect male spouse?
I wouldn't want a female one.
There are rocks beside the lake
and sand, each wave is changing.
No day is like the one before or
after. I have to be the husband.
Love isn't something you describe
in a poem, or a marriage. The fields
are crowded with untended flowers.
They are rooted. They keep needing
daylight and things that make them grow.

Katharine Zadravec

Penance

My perch precarious, I sit
above the traffic
as children clamber
and my husband's fervor
stirs
the neighbors.
I admire the views, keeping my balance
not looking down
too often—
escape artist,
like Simon Stylites, whose chosen penance
led followers into a desert
(many of them women).

T. R. Hummer

The Rural Carrier Discovers That Love Is Everywhere

A registered letter for the Jensens. I walk down their drive
Through the gate of their thick-hedged yard, and by God there
they are,
On a blanket in the grass, asleep, buck-naked, honeymooners
Not married a month. I smile, turn to leave,
But can't help looking back. Lord, they're a pretty sight,
Both of them, tangled up in each other, easy in their skin—
It's their own front yard, after all, perfectly closed in
By privet-hedge and country. Maybe they were here all night.

I want to believe they'd do that, not thinking of me
Or anyone but themselves, alone in the world
Of the yard with its clipped grass and fresh-picked fruit trees.
Whatever this letter says can wait. To hell with the mail.
I slip through the gate, silent as I came, and leave them
Alone. There's no one they need to hear from.

Doris B. Jensen

Leah

I am indignant with these
Lonely panics that invade
My rightful marriage bed.
Lying in a sweat,
Tense as a listening cat,
Holding my breath,
I hear him breathe.
He turns to me in his sleep,
And I dare to touch
His warm and vulnerable
Thigh.

Nancy G. Westerfield

Laying a Cornerstone

The commendations are his: alumnus,
Emeritus, late and distinguished benefactor;
I am the widow, standing for him,
Standing responding Amen to the invocation
Lifting him strangely from mine to humanity's.
Yet he is steadfastly mine;
Where the space invisibly stands at my side
That he filled with wit and style, I can feel
His sympathy reaching me still
For this prim ordeal of dedication
And eulogy, wherein he becomes edifice.
The cornerstone tabled in place stands for him;
Trowel in hand, I address him as stone:
Genesis-stone of foundations, benediction
Pronounces him; I touch
Stone, for a stone's embrace.

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tieth century with a disillusionment about the modern world that the war only confirmed. However, unlike many nineteenth century philosophers and theologians of progress, Catholics had not projected historical paradise in some future which a mere war could destroy. James J. Walsh's famous book, *The Thirteenth: Greatest of Centuries*, appeared in 1907 and expressed the Catholic consensus that the middle ages were the golden ages. The future is always a gamble, after all, but gothic architecture and scholastic philosophy offered proof positive that men could live with "splendor of mind"—the moderns need only revive it.

Thus, while mainstream American thought experienced profound disillusionment about the prospects of mankind, Catholic medievalism became curiously engrafted onto traditional American optimism. In 1928, Daniel Lord, S.J., who had advised Cecil B. DeMille on the filming of *King of Kings*, staged an elaborate pageant in New York City which ended with a group of actors in medieval robes urging Catholics to fight valiantly for "cross and flag." In an editorial, "The Coming of St. Aquinas," *Modern Schoolman* would say in 1925 that Thomism was uniquely modern and American: "As new as the radio, as strong as Niagara, as big as the American prairies. When America discovers him (and it ultimately will) he will become a fixed American institution." From the hindsight of 1980, one can only echo the sentiments of neo-scholastic critic John F. McCormick, S.J., who characterized such sentiments as "pathetically earnest."

Such is the story line of Halsey's account and the incidents are culled from his exceptionally thorough scholarship. He seems to have read everything and everybody; one gets both the sense of movements and the style of individuals. All sorts of names which I had not contemplated in years came back to life and took on new dimension: Fr. James Gillis, Imogen Guiney, Sister Madeleva. Extended accounts are given to Michael Williams, a founder of *Commonweal*, George Shuster and Scott Fitzgerald. Even the brief paragraphs on lesser lights

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are sensitive and stylish. On Fulton Sheen: "(his) literal exactness was his greatest liability as his thoughts seemed to frost before reaching the page." Halsey's work is truly fine—finely textured, finely argued. This volume is recommended to anyone who wishes to understand Wilfrid Sheed's later characterization of Catholicism between the two wars as "an amalgam of quaintness plus an awful lot of football."

Although the revival of old names from the pages of the diocesan newspaper and my high school literature book was a charming reason for reading Halsey's book, the deep issues confronted by Catholic thinkers of that time are scarcely resolved in the present day. In 1923, George Shuster cautiously placed D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* on the Reserve Shelf for his literature course at Notre Dame. The Prefect of Religion, John F. O'Hara, C.S.C., spied it and promptly tore it up. One can be reasonably sure that is not happening in South Bend today. But the battle between prelate and poet, between abstract names and the names of regiments, is far from resolved in contemporary Catholic thought. The Thomism espoused so eagerly as the base of Catholic optimism and rationality lingers on despite the scrapping of scholastic manuals and considerable inattention to Thomas himself. (My own reading of the actual Thomas Aquinas would not cast him in the rationalistic style favored in the period covered by Halsey's book.) The problem that Catholicism seems unable to face successfully is the *historicity* of Christ and the church.

Walker Percy in one of his philosophical pieces says that Christianity is "not a member in good standing of the World's Greatest Religions but a unique Person-Event-Thing in time." He goes on to quote approvingly from Kierkegaard, "the object of the student is the teaching not the teacher, while the object of the Christian is not the teaching but the teacher." Catholic novelist Percy can agree with Hemingway that names of regiments and towns may come closer to telling us of salvation than abstract theological terms. The contemporary quarrel between ecclesiastical abstraction and the living concreteness of poetry and story does not take on the energetic directness of Fr. O'Hara's assault on *The Rainbow*, but the temptation persists to relay a message rather than mediate again over a Messenger's history which is full of names, dates and deeds. In the final pages of his book, Halsey quotes Thomas Merton on Catholic philosophy: "It should be our greatest strength that we don't have on the end of our tongues, a brief pithy rationalization for the structure and purpose of the whole universe. . . ." The Christian defense against loss of hope is not a rational philosophy *argued* but a central story *told* from which sketches of salvation, lines of purpose, and currents of interpretation flow.

Halsey's book depicts with great sensitivity the intellectual currents which defined Catholic thought between the wars. If Catholics were spared the disillusion of the twenties, they have now experienced their own disillusion with ecclesial Catholicism. Many have abandoned that "innocent" church. For all its medieval drapery, the church of Gillis and Daniel Lord may have been, however, merely a Cartesian wax-works.

This book is the second in a series of Notre Dame Studies in Catholicism. Aside from a skimpy index (a fault in a book so chock full of people), it is handsomely produced and one hopes the rest of the series will be the equal of this absorbing study.

Revolution & the persistence of evil

THE MORAL MEANING OF REVOLUTION

Jon P. Gunneman

Yale University Press, $15, 261 pp.

Joseph L. Walsh

RECENT YEARS have seen a remarkable flourishing of ethics and political philosophy. Problems arising from medical and behavioral technology and research have given rise to new fields like bioethics. Even perennial questions in political philosophy about justice and equality, while being much less adequately addressed, have attracted renewed interest.

The same cannot be said, however, about ethical reflection on the complex and important problem of political and social revolution. Liberation theology obviously is a notable exception. But the various forms of liberation theology and the opposition they have spawned are in large part advocacy literature, contending either that revolution is the social meaning of the Gospel in our times or that it is the most seductive of anti-Christs. Only a few writers like Denis Goulet and Peter Berger (at least in the latter's more judicious moments) have tried to treat revolution not as a cause to be defended or attacked but as an ethical problem to be evaluated as a prelude to action.

There are many reasons for this lack of careful reflection. The sheer complexity of the subject matter, demanding as it does a combination of economic, historical, and political sophistication, discourages many. For others, the passion which revolution arouses clouds the issue.

It is to the credit of Jon P. Gunneman, Associate Professor of Social Ethics at the Yale Divinity School, that he has grasped the difference between ethics and advocacy, and has written a book which, given the embryonic state of the ethics of revolution, is an important contribution. It is, however, testimony to the difficulties of the subject and its many pitfalls that his book, for all its value, falls so far short of providing an adequate moral theory of revolution.

According to Gunneman, previous analysis of social revolution has remained relatively superficial by conceiving of it only as a change in economic and political personnel or structures without penetrating to the deeper levels of symbol and myth. Using Thomas Kuhn's explanation of scientific revolutions as changes in explanatory paradigms arising from anomalous phenomena that no longer fit the old paradigms, Gunneman argues that social revolution involves a paradigm change in the theodicy (rational explanation) of social evil: who suffers injustice and why? Revolutions,

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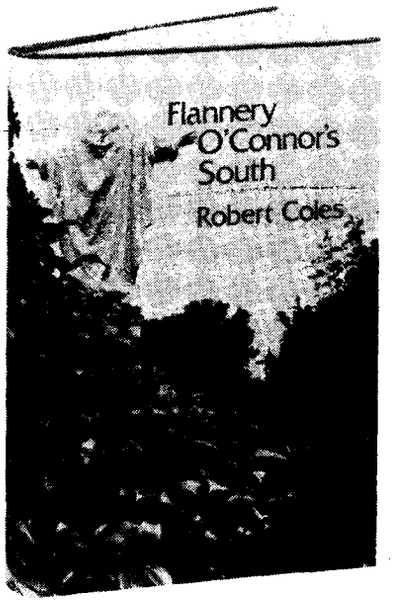
he contends, are either dualistic and simplistic in character or dialectical. In dualistic, simplistic revolutions, those responsible for the suffering are replaced as rulers by their former victims (as in millenarial revolutions like Thomas Meunzer's or Frantz Fanon's violent destruction of colonial oppressors). In Marx's dialectical theory of revolution, the sufferers are victims not so much of ill will but of an economic system which oppresses them simply for its own growth (capital), but which, dialectically, multiplies the sufferers in number and intensity and breeds a new universal class (the proletariat) which leads humanity (the human victimizers included) to suffer from capital no more.

But despite its dialectical sophistication, Marx's theory of revolution is unsatisfactory also. According to Gunneman, Marx fails to show how an anomic proletariat, which is the dialectic negation of capitalism, can be both bereft of cultural cohesion and also the universal class capable of ending the evil of class exploitation by creating a superior, more humane culture. Gunneman recognizes that in his revolutionary practice Marx stressed practical proletarian democracy in trade unions and representative politics. But Gunneman claims, with some justification, that there is an unresolved conflict in Marx's theory on this point. On the other hand, Gunneman himself leaves unresolved the extent to which revolutionary movements based on Marx are crippled by this theoretical conflict, thus weakening, as we shall see, his own attempts to formulate an ethics of participation in contemporary revolutions.

For Gunneman, revolutions invariably fail to achieve their theoretical goals because success in formulating a paradigm change in the explanation of evil cannot itself cause evil to disappear. The victorious revolutionary therefore is left with no resources to explain its persistence and only terror and violence to drive it from sight. Gunneman is critical of liberation theologians like Jurgen Moltmann for too readily embracing Marxism as representing for our times the Christian's traditional identification with the oppressed and the powerless. He contends that Moltmann does not address the theoretical problems in Marx's theory of the proletariat and criticizes him for suggesting that traditional, just war criteria might be used to moderate the violence associated heretofore with Marxist revolutions. For Gunneman, a paradigm change on the level of symbolic consciousness like revolution is beyond any calculus for weighing good and evil means. Those who do not fully share its commitment cannot hope to moderate it by external criteria like just war theory.

Gunneman is no fatalist about revolutions, however, as this bare-bones summation might suggest. Unlike so many other critics, he does not use his apocalyptic/millenarial framework to dismiss revolution as a pathological aberration. Given the terrible injustice in the world and Marx's "irreversible insight" into its global and systemic causes, he believes that continued pressures for revolution are inevitable. In the face of these pressures, Christian responsibility requires limiting revolution's tendency to make the last state worse than the first

Challenges to Despair



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by striving for those limited forms of justice which are the only possibilities open to humans. Gunneman wants Christians to avoid either embracing or rejecting revolution as good or evil in itself and to influence its course by helping it create institutions that embody justice for all, including the former oppressors.

It is at this point, however, that the inadequacy of Gunneman's moral theory of revolution becomes most apparent. On what grounds does a Christian (or any responsible person) go about influencing a movement if his analysis condemns him to the role of outsider? Gunneman would have the Christian and the revolutionary recognize in their common concern for justice the basis for dialogue and cooperation. Yet his critique offers no basis on which anyone rejecting the revolution's claim to eliminate evil can help it recognize and strive for lesser, more attainable goals. Gunneman is correct in saying that the idea of revolution is "no substitute for moral judgment." But his own moral theory of revolution, limiting itself to analyzing revolutionary theory to the exclusion of practice, is itself severely hampered in contributing to moral judgments about participation in any given revolutionary movement.

Gunneman does comment in passing about Marxist revolutionary practice in the Soviet Union and China, but only to confirm his judgment about the failure of revolution to eliminate social evil. The history of revolutionary practice, however, reveals much more institutional creativity for justice than Gunneman appears to recognize. One thinks of the successful Chinese Communist agricultural cooperatives in Yenan province, for example, established while the war for power raged against the Kuomintang. The spontaneous democratic assemblies (soviets) that emerged in the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917 are seen by Hannah Arendt as a link between the early stages of the Russian revolutions and the more democratic American and French revolutions. The ethics of revolutions must attend to institutional innovations like these, not because they justify revolutions' grander claims, but in order to discover what in revolutions should be aided and fostered and, of course, whether they can be. Indeed, one is struck by the absence of any discussion of the revolutionary origins of democracy in Gunneman's analysis. Surely the democratic effects of the French Revolution and its progeny reveal the error of evaluating that movement only in terms of the violence resulting from its utopian, Jacobin theory.

A major task of the ethics of revolution lies in discerning among the mixed results of revolutionary theory and practice those elements which should be furthered and those which should be resisted as inconsistent with the theory's own best aspirations. In treating revolution as a kind of preternatural phenomenon obeying a logic beyond the reach of critical judgment, Gunneman ironically accords to revolution precisely that absolute claim which only its most dogmatic adherents still assert for it. When Gunneman says that it is not the task of moral judgment to decide whether revolution in general is essentially good or bad, i.e., the contemporary form of the Kingdom of God or Satan, he is on the right track. But he then fails to see that the ethics which he proposes must also deal with those periods of revolutionary turbulence when a person must, and can, choose among competing movements those which appear more likely to achieve some greater degree of justice. The ethics of revolution must formulate criteria for those people who have come to recognize that they can influence the course of events only as trusted participants, but who are also determined to evaluate the revolution's demands according to their own inner lights and convictions.

As Gunneman fears, there are certainly serious dangers for those who decide on such a course of participation. Gunneman likens revolutionary belonging to religious conversion and wisely warns of the blindness that uncritical commitment can cause. Marx and Engels gave far too little attention to the dangerous power of this dimension of human existence. By Gunneman's own admission, however, revolutionary movements are not religious conventicles and people belong to them on varying levels of consciousness and commitment. If revolutionary paradigms are natural and not demonic creations, they are capable of good as well as bad effects. It is the task of conscience, aided by ethics, to know and act on the difference. I hope that Gunneman will continue the work so seriously begun here.

Let's look at the record

PREJUDICE AND THE OLD POLITICS: THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1928

Allan J. Lichtman

Univ. of North Carolina, $20, 366 pp.

William B. Hixson, Jr.

IN the mid-1920's, the story goes, the residents of a small town in Indiana were so convinced by the local Klan that the pope would arrive on the next train that 1500 of them surrounded the first remotely clerical-looking passenger to disembark, and only after protracted explanations allowed him to leave. And that was before Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York became the first Roman Catholic ever to receive a presidential nomination. After the Democrats nominated him in 1928, the currents of anti-Catholic feeling reached flood tide. For millions of American Protestants the republic was now threatened by the domination of what one Methodist newspaper defined as "a degenerate form of Christianity." For the gullible that statement took on added meaning with the appearance of tracts which purported to tell "how the Pope converted the Vatican into a house of ill-fame." As Election Day approached, the *New York Times* could soberly report the observation of an Oklahoma journalist that, in his state at least, "you can find men and women, and they are by no means few, who seem to believe that Smith's election would result in civil war."

Yet the man who drove so many Protestant Americans to distraction was, fully as much as his Republican opponent Hoover, at ease with the values and institutions of the corporate capitalism of

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the 1920's. Having (again like Hoover) risen from modest beginnings, Smith had little inclination to challenge the system which had allowed him to succeed. His support as Governor for anti-injunction, factory-safety, and child-labor legislation could not conceal the fact that he had become, as Walter Lippmann shrewdly observed, "the most powerful conservative in urban America." Those who can explain Smith's subsequent denunciations of the New Deal only in terms of thwarted ambition should look again at his 1928 campaign: his abandonment of the historic Democratic commitment to low tariffs, his waffling on the issue of farm relief, his call for government retrenchment (after five years of Calvin Coolidge!), and perhaps most important his appointment of John J. Raskob, finance chairman of General Motors, as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Even on the most heated issue of the day, that of prohibition, Smith's position was a good deal more moderate than many remember: he vowed to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act, going only so far as to suggest that the Constitution be further amended to allow states to manufacture and sell "alcoholic beverages" (as defined by Congress) within their own borders.

Perceptive contemporaries noticed these two aspects of the 1928 election—the exceptional salience of Smith's Catholicism and his conservative stance on the issues—but would have been surprised to see the election invested with the significance it has since come to hold. It was not until 1952, with the publication of Samuel Lubell's *The Future of American Politics*, that the 1928 election was reinterpreted for our time. Picking up the emerging trends in political science and foreshadowing the "new political history" that was to come, Lubell told his readers that he was going to "swing the spotlight away from Washington out into the country," for "it is there, among the people themselves, that the real drama of political change is being acted out." And looking at "the people's" voting behavior he concluded that "Smith's defeat in 1928, rather than Roosevelt's 1932 victory, marked off the arena in which today's politics are being fought," because Smith "embodies . . . the revolt of the underdog urban immigrant against the top dog of 'old American' stock." The Democratic loss of five Southern states was temporary; Smith's victory in traditionally Republican Massachusetts and Rhode Island and, even more, his plurality in the nation's twelve largest cities were the portents of things to come. After Lubell's reinterpretation, the election of 1928 had become nothing less than one of those fundamental shifts of power which periodically recur in American politics, or what political scientists were beginning to call "a critical election."

Now a quarter-century after Lubell's book, comes a new study of the 1928 election, *Prejudice and the Old Politics*, by a young historian, Allan Lichtman. Armed both with the most sophisticated

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ISBN 0-87805-117-1, 160 pages, cloth, $9.95.

by W. J. Cunningham

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methods of quantitative analysis and (what other quantifiers often lack) a solid grasp of the underlying realities of class and power, Lichtman has written what will almost surely be the definitive book on the subject. His book throws so many shafts of light on so many subjects (ranging from the disarray of organized feminism in the 1920's to the complicity of the Republican high command in the anti-Catholic offensive of 1928) that it is impossible in this review to do justice to them all. But several of his conclusions are directly relevant both to the observations of contemporaries and to Lubell's reinterpretation of the election.

Since the appearance of Lubell's book, analysts of the 1928 election have tended to describe it in terms of what Lichtman calls a unidimensional model, with Catholic-wet-foreign-urban Smith supporters challenging Protestant-dry-native-rural Hoover supporters. Taking each factor independently, and subjecting it to meticulous examination, Lichtman finds no such neat overall cleavage. The urban-rural split between voters in 1928, for example, was less than that in 1940; the foreign-born component of Smith's vote was no greater than Roosevelt's in 1932 and less than that of LaFollette in 1924; and the surge of newly-enfranchised women for Smith (a point which Lubell and others have emphasized) was overwhelmed by the parallel surge of women for Hoover. Prohibition as an issue was important but not decisive, if only because so many "wets" voted for Hoover. And thus Lichtman leaves us with what many suspected at the time: the overwhelming source of conflict in the 1928 election was religion. "No other division within the electorate stands out so prominently," he says, as that between Protestants and Catholics. And this Protestant consensus sprang less from perceived differences with Catholics over social and cultural questions than from sheer defensiveness; it was not so much ethnocultural, he neatly remarks, as ethnocentric.

Because of the special role of Smith's religion, which disproportionately attracted Catholics and repelled Protestants, the 1928 election cannot serve as "a critical election" because the most important cleavage was unique to that election. Here Lichtman builds upon a number of recent studies of individual cities and states which already cast doubt on the critical nature of the 1928 election. But he goes farther, arguing that, in the 2,000 non-Southern counties he has studied, no one election between 1916 and 1940 can be considered "critical." That particular conclusion raises other questions, but his main point stands: Lubell, and all the historians and political scientists who have followed him, were simply mistaken. There was no "Al Smith Revolution," no fundamental realignment of voters in 1928.

Finally, Lichtman considers the often heard argument that prosperity made the Republicans invulnerable to any Democratic challenge. It was not the reality of prosperity that saved the Republicans in 1928, he concludes, but its ideology, for throughout the decade the farm population was chronically depressed and a majority of workers lived at or near the poverty level. Had Smith articulated their grievances and not joined in the American celebration of the 1920's, Lichtman suggests, he might have done far better at the polls. Perhaps; even as it was, Smith's vote contained a clear lower-class component, separable from his Catholic support. For some lower-class voters, apparently, Smith's personal appeal and the Democrats' party image were more important than his conservative stance on the issues.

If Lichtman's discussion of religious conflict in the 1928 election suggests how much America has changed, his discussion of these economic factors suggests how much America has *not* changed. Without a clear, universally perceived economic crisis (which seldom seems to occur), neither the Democrats nor Republicans will challenge the prevailing corporate definition of reality. Without a viable third party on the Left (which seems to be foreclosed), the Democrats need only rekindle the party images of yesteryear to receive the major portion of lower class votes, and the candidate becomes free to accommodate himself to the prevailing values and institutions of the day. In defeat, Al Smith stands as a courageous fighter for religious pluralism in a difficult time. Had

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he won, however, what kind of campaign would he, as a business-oriented Democrat, have waged in the deteriorating economic conditions of 1932? Watching the candidates' responses to the economic situation of 1980, one wonders.

Revitalizing our common beliefs

REVIVALS, AWAKENINGS, AND REFORM

William G. McLoughlin

Univ. of Chicago, $12.50, 239 pp.

R. Emmett Curran

AT THE END of a decade that has witnessed a born-again Baptist ascend the pulpit of the White House and scores of thousands of charismatics fill the stadiums of metropolitan New York on Pentecost Sunday, enlightened Americans are perhaps more disposed than they were, say in the early sixties, to take revivalism seriously, at least as something more culturally significant than the atavistic crusades of Billy Graham or the evangelical hustle of a Reverend Ike suggest. Historians during the past generation have increasingly discovered the vital role that revivalism played in shaping the early culture of this country. In this outstanding volume of the Chicago History of American Religion series, William McLoughlin offers the most comprehensive view to date of the significance of revivals and awakenings in the evolution of American culture.

In his classic study, *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham*, (1959) McLoughlin concluded that revivals have produced few lasting results and in the twentieth century have become marginal forces on the American cultural landscape. Great Awakenings he treated as super revivals, but he also noted that the awakening constituted a "reexamination and redefinition of the nation's social and intellectual values which must take place from time to time in order to maintain a balance between tradition and change."

The ferment of the past twenty years and a deeper acquaintance with the social sciences have led McLoughlin to broaden his cultural filter. If revivalism was the dominant theme of his earlier study, awakenings are at the core of this more mature work. His new emphasis is on civil religion rather than Christianity as a means of charting the complex evolution of the nation's identity and values. Following the model devised by the anthropologist Anthony F.C. Wallace, McLoughlin identifies awakenings with revitalization movements—folk movements that transform the culture by evoking a new understanding and definition of the common core of beliefs that undergird it (the covenant ideal, the Protestant ethic, the free and responsible individual operating under a body of higher moral laws and so on).

Awakenings occur when there are rampant cultural distortions within society, when day-to-day behavior deviates so far from the traditional norms that neither individuals nor large groups can honestly sustain the common set of religious understandings by which they believe they should act. Invariably nativist movements arise, mistaking symptoms for causes, finding scapegoats among those outside the mainstream of the culture, and preaching a return to old ways as the price of salvation. In time prophets appear who shed "new lights" on the old values and begin to attract the more flexible members of the society, usually the young who are the first victims of a crisis in cultural legitimacy. Gradually these "new lights" rework the common ideology, give new meaning to the old symbols, and reform the institutions in order to adapt to the basic social, psychological, and economic changes that have brought on the crisis in the first place. Each awakening, according to McLoughlin, has enabled us to emerge with renewed self-confidence as a people and to inaugurate those recurrent eras of social and institutional reform that we celebrate as the American liberal tradition. Thus the Revolution was the secular fulfilment of the religious ideals of the First Great Awakening (1730-1760), the

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Second Great Awakening (1800-1830) marked America's Coming of Age as a subculture within western civilization, and the Third (1890-1928) provided the major shift in the prevailing ideological climate to make possible the New Deal.

By McLoughlin's reckoning there have been five such revitalization movements in our history starting with the Puritans in 1630 and culminating with the current one that he dates from 1960. Each has lasted approximately three decades. Each has served to redefine the relationship between self and society so that the enterprising individual might remain free and the common good be preserved. In that oscillation the self usually acquired greater autonomy within the institutional framework. Moreover, the pervasive pluralism of this society was steadily enlarged in each synthesis that has resulted (the South during the Second Great Awakening being the major exception). Out of each awakening has arisen a new sense of peoplehood, of the greater point of identification that transcends the self. From awakening to awakening the boundaries of the peoplehood have expanded and shrunk as the Americans vision of who is "chosen" has changed from mankind itself in the aftermath of the Revolution to White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans a century later.

As noted earlier, formal revivalism plays a much diminished role in this broader understanding of awakenings. Whereas a John Cotton, a Jonathan Edwards, a Lyman Beecher were at the heart of the regenerative process of the earlier awakenings, the two Billys of modern revivalism—Sunday and Graham—are at the core of the cultural confusion, out of touch with the prevailing shift in American culture, pathetic prophets of the new nativism with its wedding of theological and political fundamentalism. Beginning with the Third Great Awakening at the end of the 19th century McLoughlin finds the "new lights" in the ranks of those outside revivalism—Social Gospel prophets like Walter Rauschenbusch and Progressives such as John Dewey.

In the Fourth Great Awakening that is still very much upon us the polyglot "new lights" range from the Beats of the fifties (the first to offer an alternate philosophy for the new age) to Carlos Castaneda and the Beatles. As in previous awakenings the young have been heavily involved. In their search for symbols to give new meaning and order to life they have turned to Zen and drugs and other non-western religious sources in unprecedented fashion. To what degree the counterculture of the Sixties has made inroads upon our society is still difficult to measure. McLoughlin realizes that we are far from reaching a new consensus in our belief-value system. Despite the fascination with the Orient in the present awakening he does not expect this consensus to emerge from any syncretism of East and West. Instead he discerns some form of Judeo-Christian socialism on the ideological horizon, working its way—as all "renewed" ideologies have—from the bottom up.

He concludes: "The reason an awakening takes a generation or more to work itself out is that it must grow with the young; it must escape the enculturation of the old ways. It is not worthwhile to ask who the prophet of this awakening is or to search for new ideological blueprints in the works of the learned. Revitalization is growing up around us in our children who are both more innocent and more knowing than their parents and grandparents. It is their world that has yet to be reborn."

A romantic coda to be sure. One is tempted to ask which young: the alien youth of the Sixties or their apathetic counterparts of the Seventies or the unknown young of the Eighties? Nor is it easy to see the ferment of the past two decades as a revitalization of the old symbols rather than a rejection of them. If the new American, as Robert Jay Lifton suggests, is Protean Man, he may well be capable of forging a new consensus out of the chaos of modern life but one wonders whether any prophet will find a majority in this last quarter of the twentieth century.

It is easy enough to fault McLoughlin's vision. Despite his broadened understanding of awakenings, he underplays the influence of the non-revivalistic forces during the earlier Awakenings (e.g. the Transcendentalists). He does not accommodate Jews or Catholics into his folk movements until the 1950s although the growing evidence is that they were part of earlier revitalizations of the culture and not simply as scapegoats for nativists. Indeed Jay Dolan has shown that revivalism was an integral part of American Catholicism in the nineteenth century and constituted an important factor in shaping Catholic identity.

But the wonder is that in scarcely more than two hundred pages McLoughlin has made such sense of our experience as a people. One may not share his optimism about the present awakening but as Martin Marty notes in his foreword, he has given new life to Tillich's conviction that religion is the soul of culture and culture the form of religion.

The friendship of two 'seekers'

THE BROWNSON-HECKER CORRESPONDENCE

Edited and introduced by Joseph F. Gower and Richard M. Leliaert

Univ. of Notre Dame, $20, xxii + 345 pp.

Peter W. Williams

THE LETTERS ably collected in this volume relate graphically the story of an always deep but often stormy friendship between two of the most colorful "seekers" in the American experience. Orestes Brownson and Isaac Hecker. Both arose from obscure Protestant backgrounds, educated themselves mostly by their own efforts, experimented with political reform, Transcendentalism, communal life, and other enthusiasms of the antebellum era, and finally emerged as major convert-apologists for the Catholic church in a culture which regarded such activity as eccentric at best and, at the worst, subversive. While much of their voluminous public writing has not worn well over the

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years, the correspondence which chronicles intellectual and spiritual odysseys has fared much better in its appeal to and relevance for the contemporary reader.

The earliest letters in this collection date from the beginning of the 1840s, when Hecker and his brothers enlisted Brownson as a speaker and propagandist for their political movement in New York. Both men, however, rapidly forsook politics as their principal concern, and Brownson came to play the role virtually of Hecker's spiritual director as both moved closer to Rome in their religious quest. Particularly interesting are Hecker's descriptions of his continual lapses into mystic-like states, and Brownson's admonitions to him "to resist this tendency to mysticism, to sentimental luxury." Religion, for Brownson, was an affair of the intellect and will rather than the emotions, and he saw his mission as guiding his younger friend into firm institutional and intellectual channels which would prevent his other-worldliness from running amok.

Over the decades, however, an ironic role reversal began to emerge as Hecker became firmly ensconced as a religious founder and leader, while Brownson underwent continued and stormy emotional and intellectual alternations even while remaining securely within the Catholic fold. When Hecker went to Rome to protest his treatment at the hands of the Redemptorists and later returned to found the strictly American Paulists, Brownson's support waned and nearly turned to a churlish repudiation of his friend. Later, when Hecker and his convert-colleague Augustine Hewit edited the popular *Catholic World*, Brownson became one of their stable of anonymous staff-writers, and much of the later correspondence records his grumbling over what he regarded as Hewit's censoring of his articles in the direction of what to him seemed close to heresy. And, in the long run, Hecker's impact on the American Church far exceeded that of the twenty-thousand-odd pages of Brownson's collected writings. With the exception of the brilliant *American Republic*, most of Brownson is now nearly unreadable; Hecker's books have fared little better, but his editorial, homiletic, and institutional contributions to a distinctively American Church have left their mark.

The real fascination of the Brownson-Hecker correspondence lies in the two men's conceptions of the possibilities of Catholicism in the context of American society and culture. Soon after his conversion, Brownson began to discover that the church into which he had talked himself intellectually was quite something else again culturally. "*Inter nos*," he wrote to Hecker in 1845, "I do not like in general our Irish population . . . Our Irish priests are either bent upon making money, or else they are Irishmen before they are Catholics." After the Civil War, however, he would write, "I . . . am almost beginning to despair of the American experiment . . . I think I am turning Paddy. I have lost confidence in my countrymen, & become ashamed of them."

Hecker, on the other hand, grew more and more certain of the rightness of the American experiment, not only for secular purposes but also for the good of the church. Where Brownson grew increasingly sour as to the possibilities of democracy, Hecker became more convinced that the American way of tolerance and disestablishment was the cure for Europe's evils as well. Although, as his scathing remarks on his friend Thoreau's *Walden* reveal, he was not uncritical of the culture around him, he nevertheless set himself the goal of bringing to his native-born compatriots a religion which he saw as ultimately fulfilling rather than repudiating the promise of the new nation. The eventual involvement of his order in the controversy over "Americanism" showed that the way was not to be all smooth; in the end, however, it was Hecker's way which seems to have prevailed.

The Brownson-Hecker Correspondence is well edited, almost too thoroughly annotated, and is prefaced with an engaging and useful introduction. It bodes well as the maiden volume in the "Notre Dame Studies in American Catholicism Series," and should commend itself to all who may be interested in American religious, cultural and intellectual life.

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Coming of age in America

CATHOLICS AND AMERICAN POLITICS

Mary T. Hanna
Harvard Univ. Press, $15.00, 262 pp.

Mary C. Segers

ONE MIGHT have thought Andrew Greeley had said all there was to say about American Catholics, their socio-economic status, their political attitudes, their religious beliefs. But no; Mary Hanna, a political scientist at the State University of New York at Binghamton, adds significantly to the study of American Catholics with this new book whose publication, accidentally or, more probably, by design, coincided with the visit of Pope John Paul II to the United States. The novelty of Hanna's book is that she dares to study "the Catholic Church's role as a political interest group attempting to achieve its goals in and through political activities and structures."

To sociologist Greeley's work she adds the expertise of the political scientist in studying political ethnicity. Noting that ethnic groups to a great extent are now behaving as political interest groups, she approaches American Catholicism as an ethnic-based political interest group whose primary identifying bond is religion. I believe this project is novel and daring because it is precisely the notion of Catholics - functioning - as - a - political - interest - group which in the past struck fear in the hearts of Know-Nothings and assorted other anti-Romanists.

Hanna asks: To what extent do Catholics function as a political interest group, and what political influence does that interest group have? To answer these questions, she examines the Catholic people as a whole (through NORC survey data), twenty-two institutional church leaders (bishops, priests, editors, writers, organization leaders), and twenty-six Catholic political leaders (senators and congressmen). She concludes that Catholics do function as a political interest group at some times, on some occasions, and that they have been successful in obtaining certain economic benefits for their group.

However, in attempting to gain recognition for distinctively Catholic values—and here the issue of abortion is seen as a prime example of fundamental conflict between Catholic values and those of many Americans—Catholics appear to be violating two rules of the game of American politics: strictures concerning the separation of church and state, and the prohibition against political pressure on behalf of particularized interests rather than general interests. Hanna notes that while Catholics have earned high status in American society by essentially assimilating its values and playing according to the rules of the game, some are now challenging or at least questioning these rules, particularly those which prohibit religions seeking to represent their value-positions in the political process.

On the larger question of the resurgence of ethnic politics, Hanna does not fear the Balkanization of America; she thinks ethnic interest group politics is here to stay, will probably result in intensified political conflict in the short run, but should result in the long run in "a truly pluralistic, rather than a melting pot, society marked by respect and appreciation of one another's differences and a more equitable, just, and creative national life."

I find it difficult to review this book, partly because it is a highly detailed analysis, providing a wealth of information based upon composite survey data and upon lengthy, unstructured interviews with church and political leaders. It is a very "academic" book; true to the canons of value-free social science, Hanna allows herself an explicit value judgment only at the very end. As she indicates in her last paragraph, American Catholics have arrived—and surely "the current Catholic sense of self-confidence, participation, and political legitimacy is healthier than the feelings of a ghettoized people seemingly locked out of national politics." A democratic society should benefit from what Catholics can contribute; "we have so much to give." Throughout the book it is clear, if only implicitly, that Hanna approves the increased political and social involvement of Catholics on a whole range of social justice issues.

To say that the Catholic church in America has come of age is to recognize the increasing numbers of Catholics in Congress, the plethora of Catholic candidates in presidential politics over the last twenty years, the high socio-economic status of Catholics in the society as a whole. It is to recognize, as Hanna notes, that American Catholics are not superpatriots but are now willing to criticize American wars and the values of American capitalist society. The "prophetic" wing of the American Catholic church represented or symbolized by Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez, and the Berrigans, has, according to Hanna, helped to transform the church's heightened concern about abortion into a much broader ideology of respect for life on a wide variety of issues. Unfortunately, this broadening of the abortion issue has affected only one of the three major anti-abortion organizations, the National Youth Pro-Life Coalition. The National Committee for a Human Life Amendment and the National Right to Life organizations have retained the narrow single-issue focus partly for reasons

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of political strategy. (Hanna notes the financial and institutional support by the church of these groups).

Approximately twenty-five percent of this book is devoted to the church's concern with abortion. Hanna notes a diversity of views among the three groups she chose to examine: institutional church leaders were unanimously opposed to abortion and to the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*. A few Catholic congressmen were concerned with congressional norms concerning the inappropriateness and inefficiency of riders such as the Hyde Amendment; other congressmen sensed a conflict between their respect for the Court and for the law and their own personal moral and religious beliefs. At least one senator saw the inconsistency between asking Southerners to obey the Court's desegregation decision in *Brown* vs. *Board of Education* (1954) and urging Catholics not to obey the Court's abortion decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*. As for the attitudes of the Catholic people on the whole, they are more willing than institutional church leaders to make exceptions—to laws restricting abortion—for cases where the mother's life is threatened, the fetus is defective, or the pregnancy has resulted from rape or incest. Hanna does not explain these different Catholic perspectives on abortion; one is tempted to speculate that these different perspectives may be attributed to different roles: church leaders are concerned with social morality, congressmen must perforce concern themselves with respect for political institutions, and the average Catholic parent must bear the burdens of childrearing directly.

Hanna defines religion sociologically in this book, a feat which enables her to treat Catholics as a political interest group but which also makes Catholic political activity vulnerable to the criticism that it violates the constitutional separation of church and state. Additionally, she seems unclear as to whether American Catholicism, the American Catholic church, or American Catholics are the object of her study. Given the current legal argument that Congressional riders restricting Medicaid abortions violate the First Amendment because they enact a religious view of abortion into civil law, one wishes Hanna had devoted more attention to this criticism of Catholic political activity. Her book does, however, make the intense Catholic concern with abortion more understandable and should help to dispel the myth that a monolithic religion seeks to impose its own narrow, repressive morality upon everyone else.

Correspondence

(Continued from page 322)

well as about various programs for new social orders."

Baum seeks to expose a puzzling conflict between the objective (scientific) view and the dialectical view of sociology, both held by Berger. Baum further maintains that Berger's dialectical view is unacceptable since it does not assimilate the conclusions of Marx, Mannheim, and Habermas. When the objective and the (rightly understood) dialectical approaches conflict it is the latter, Baum tells us, with its superior "rational, substantive discussion on human destiny" that makes the authentic claim to the mantle of social science. Thus we are to understand that it is unscientific of Berger to reject Marx for Weber when considering global inequalities. Similarly, it is a misplaced scientism and a faulty idea of transcendence that allow Berger to criticize the Christian left.

Sweeping claims for the dialectic are not new, even though for more than a century it has obscured, not clarified, history. Sidney Hook forty years ago pointed out: "whenever the dialectical method is distinguished from the scientific method, it is harnessed to the belief that history has some goal which will inevitably be realized . . . It is not the patterns of causality which the dialectical method uncovers but the pattern of destiny." Playing the role perfectly, Baum also tells us that "truth in social science cannot possibly be defined in terms of the mind's conformity to the social world as it is." It's all dismally reminiscent of Marcuse announcing "that which is cannot be true." Baum's warm invocation of the dialectic and critical theory is less than helpful, indeed hostile to the sociological task carried out by those impious skeptics like Peter Berger. May their tribe increase.

PATRICK J. MOLLOY

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